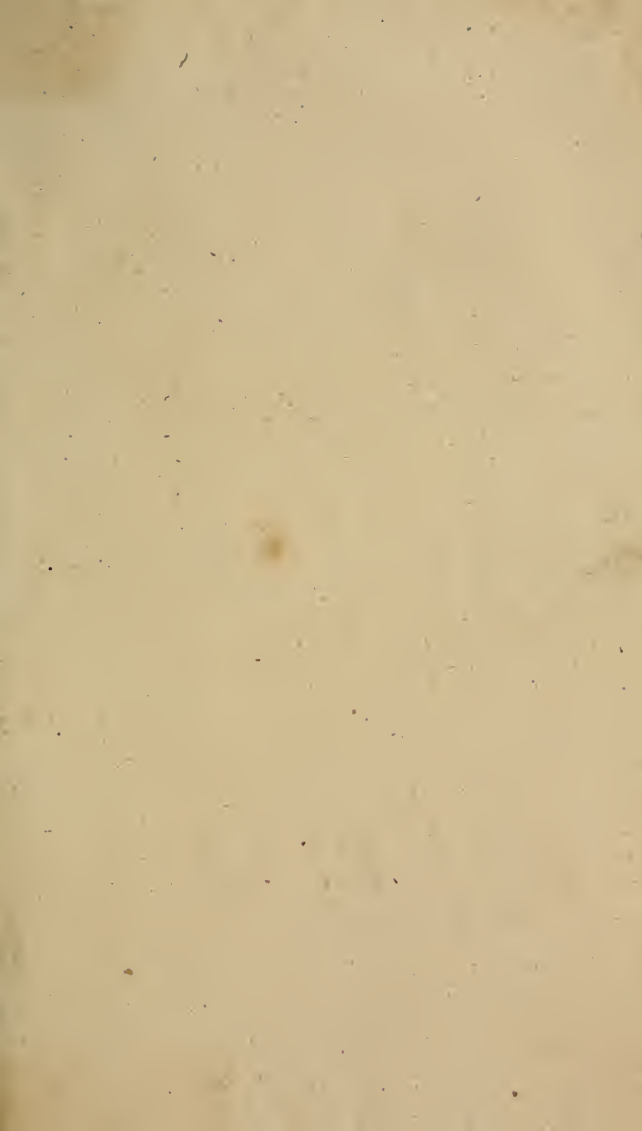




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THE  
PRIORY  
OF  
SAINT MARY.

A Romance

FOUNDED ON DAYS OF OLD.

In Four Volumes.

BY BRIDGET ST. HILAIRE.

VOL. II.

---

“ In these lone walks their days eternal bound ;  
These moss-clad roofs with spiral turrets crown'd :  
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,  
And the dim windows shed a soften'd light ;  
Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,  
And beams of sunshine brighten'd all the day.”

---

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THE

## PRIORY OF ST. MARY.



### CHAPTER IX.

THE Earl, on the preceding evening, sitting alone in his chamber, as was frequently his custom, had been surprised by beholding the light of his daughter's lamp as the beams shone faintly through the half concealed lattice; he knew that long they had been deserted in consequence of his own orders and never had reason to believe that any one had presumed to enter them since the death of their late possessor.

Indeed there was no inducement to make any one wish to explore them, for it was universally known that the Earl of Suffolk had, for years, treated his Countess with a degree of contempt as unmerited as insupportable; and the regret he publicly expressed before those of his household at her death, was the more easily credited, as they very naturally thought he might then feel for the cruelty of his former conduct; and on his ordering her apartments to be left as they were, after having passed several hours in them alone, no doubt to conceal all such papers as he did not chuse to be inspected, none of the domestics doubted but it was as he asserted, from respect to his Lady's memory, that he chose all that had once been hers, to remain undisturbed.

But the Earl of Suffolk had other reasons for the adoption of that measure, than he avowed. The haughty Margaret but little brooked those

honors which, as his wife, and daughter to a noble family, the Countess could not well be openly deprived of: yet, as a household drudge, his wife might have been endured, as she was perfectly well convinced his heart was not likely to be divided between them; but the Countess of Monmouth was a rival much too formidable, both from youth and beauty, not to raise serious alarm in a heart like hers, which ever panted to be first in every situation; and, when she heard the Earl had offered her his house as her residence, when imprudently she thought proper to disgrace herself by quitting her amiable husband, for the society of Lord Suffolk. Her indignation was without bounds, indeed, so evident was her uneasiness, that few in the circle of the Court, did not readily divine the cause, but who would presume to observe what Henry did not suspect.



The tale was circulated with every aggravation, and many who either disapproved his measures from principle, or envied the superior good fortune of the Earl, privately congratulated each other on the loss of favor, which they flattered themselves would be the consequence; but Lord Suffolk with all his errors, which were indeed more than sufficient to create an host of enemies, did not want for friends (or at least those, who to obtain his protection strove to appear such) to warn him of his danger.

To one of his lively comprehension, a hint was sufficient, and he immediately determined to appease the storm he had so uncautiously raised, by appearing to treat the Countess of Monmouth with public neglect, but her empire over his heart, was not yet expired, and he resolved it should be in appearance only; for these reasons he instantly wrote to the Countess of Suffolk, who

had long been a solitary prisoner in her own apartments to say, that he was at length willing to comply with her desire of retiring into a convent, and, that she might depart whenever she thought proper, though it must be in the most private manner possible.

Long since compelled to behold the Countess of Monmouth exercising with unblushing assurance the authority, and claiming even within the same walls the honors that by unquestionable right belonged to her. Lady Suffolk had often requested leave to retire from the Castle, a favour, which he had from obstinacy, and perhaps a fear of offending the Duke of Norfolk, as repeatedly refused, till interest, that powerful assistant to ambition, had convinced him it would effectually serve his purpose.

Within the expiration of a week the Countess bade adieu, to the walls of Stratford Castle, and escorted by a very small number of attendants, who

were still enough devoted to their mistress, to share her fortunes. She retired to the monastery of our Lady of Walsingham, while the Lady Monmouth lived almost totally retired in the suite of apartments she had quitted; being visited by scarcely any one except Lord Suffolk, who, industriously circulated a report that Lady Monmouth repenting of her follies had assumed the veil, and he, to make as much as possible some amends for the sorrows he had occasioned his Lady, passed his hours chiefly in her apartment, to which she was confined by a declining state of health.

The story so cautiously contrived, soon answered every expectation of the Earl, who was firmly convinced that pride, more than extinguished regard, had actuated Margaret, to receive him with unaccustomed coolness, for in a few short months, at the moment when all good men were congratulating

themselves on his removal from the Royal ear, their hopes were crushed by the sudden return of the Earl to Court, at the express command of the Sovereign, on whose unsuspecting nature, his artful consort had so effectually wrought, as to convince him the safety of the state was endangered by the absence of a nobleman of his unequalled merit and political understanding.

The Duke of Norfolk alone was acquainted with the true situation of the Countess of Suffolk, of which he was informed by herself; but as she was well acquainted that her Lord's desire was, that her departure from his house should be kept secret, she had particularly requested that the Duke would take no measures to make it public, as she feared by offending him he might compel her to return; and by that means, prevent her changing her residence to St. Mary's Convent, whither

she purposed to remove as soon as her health enabled her to undertake so long and fatiguing a journey, where, in the society of her then almost infant daughter Mary De la Pole, she promised herself the only consolation that her care-worn bosom, was capable of partaking.

“ But Heaven thought otherwise ;” for the short period of six months, terminated the existence of one of the most beautiful, and most unfortunate women in England. The Countess of Monmouth, deserted in her turn, by him her fascinating beauty had seduced ; and whose life, after a period of eight years, was said to be terminated by poison, in consequence of the repeated disagreements between her and the Lord Suffolk, who, about that time, was much embarrassed by a report having reached the ears of Margaret of the deception formerly practised on her credulity. Despair and

penitence preyed at first so strongly upon the temper of the Earl, that he once entertained the idea of seeking out the injured Earl of Monmouth, intreating his forgiveness, and assuming the habit of a Monk ; but a little reasonable reflection, and the whispering of ambition, convinced him he had thought of a life, least of all others, adapted to one of his disposition, and he prudently resolved to stifle such unpleasant reflections and again pursue the attainment of honors so often courted with success.

But as it was necessary still to conceal from Margaret, that the tale she had heard had any real foundation, he gave orders for the Countess to be interred in the chapel of Stratford, erected to her memory a magnificent tomb, that bore the name and titles of his wife ; and, after contriving to render the few, who were, from necessity,



entrusted with the secret, so totally dependent on his liberality, as to insure their silence, he assumed the habiliments of woe, and once more made his appearance, and received the condolence of the nobility with so good a grace, that nobody doubted of the truth of the Countess's death, a circumstance in which they were the more strongly confirmed, by the numerous branches of the Norfolk family appearing, at the same time, in mourning, but which they wore on account of the decease of a kinsman of foreign alliance, nor even knew of the report of the Countess of Suffolk's death, from the very great distance that then subsisted between their family and the Court of Henry.

Such was the account given by Father Gregory, on his return from the chamber of Lord Suffolk, to the fair Mary De la Pole, who, seated in an adjoining gallery, anxiously awaited



the result of a conversation, to which she had, by her persuasions, induced him to listen; but her persuasions, powerful as they were, had not, perhaps prevailed, had it not been for the mysterious words of her Father, which he attended to with extacy, nor did he refuse, instantly to attend him; he had, indeed, as Lord Suffolk imagined, always believed the tomb that bore her name, to contain the ashes of his once beloved Mary Mowbray, nor had he, since his return to the castle, omitted to pour forth his nightly orisons for her repose.

Some suspicious circumstances had of late occurred, which, joined to the agitation of Lord Suffolk in the chapel, had raised distressing and perplexing doubts in his mind, as to the nature of her death. Of her retiring to Walsingham Abbey, he knew not of the circumstance, being then, and for some time before that period absent

from Stratford, and the Earl had carefully avoided mentioning any thing relative to a transaction, which, for many years it best suited him to keep concealed.

The Father knew not any method by which he could unravel the mystery, but his abhorrence to Lord Suffolk had risen to so great a degree, that he determined to quit his roof and society for ever, but his attachment to the amiable Mary had hitherto detained him.

His joy, on discovering that he had been mistaken in his suspicions, and that the lovely Countess had died, and lay entombed at Walsingham, was such as brought tears into his eyes; while wringing the hand of the gentle Mary, "let not my daughter," he exclaimed, "condemn the former friend of her Father, when these tears, shed for the memory of her sainted mother, prove that even the long space of twenty re-

volving years, have not yet erased her loved idea from this rebellious heart."

Alas ! how far, how very distant was such a thought from his fair auditor ; how often did she wish that the gentle Magneville had, though with humbler fortunes, possessed the hand of Norfolk's peerless daughter, and heard the name of Suffolk at distance uninterested, unconcerned ; but though she felt her bosom eased of a weight of cares, by the account the Earl had just been relating, still there was one reflection gave her pain, nor did she scruple to avow her wish, to ease her Father's mind of the corroding grief by acknowledging that it was herself that had disturbed his mind, by her unexpected appearance in the apartments of the Countess. Gregory too well knew the violence of Lord Suffolk's disposition, to advise her, by so rash a step to hazard the weight of it ; but, anxious as herself, to free him

from the pain of an idea so distressing, for he firmly believed that it was the form of the Countess he had seen, whose injuries, he believed, disturbed her repose, and undertook, by a well-invented tale, to make him believe it was himself that had entered the chamber, believing it his duty to attempt unravelling the mystery that involved her fate.

To him, if to any one, Lord Suffolk was desirous of being kind and indulgent; he ever remembered the irreparable injury he had done him, and had, with all his failings, an unwearied desire of making him, if possible, amends. Alas! how small were all the amends in his power to make for a youth spent in unavailing sorrow and regret, and for the well founded hopes of happiness, blasted by his intruding hand; yet, from him he heard even this avowal, with more than wonted patience; perhaps, too, the satisfaction he felt in finding he had been mistaken, might

contribute, in no small degree, to this unusual forbearance.

The Royal Henry had recently removed his Court to Stratford, and the second week had now elapsed since the appearance of the Earl at Council, when he received a message from the Royal Margaret, that if he intended, or hoped to withstand the machinations of his enemies, he must appear in public, as it was already whispered that he shunned open enquiry. With a mind, little suited to the splendid scenes of the palace, he instantly arose, and repaired thither; nor would those, who were unacquainted with the pliability of this Lord's face and manners have recognised him for the man, who, two hours before, was a prey to sorrow and repentance.

Ellen de Courcy, who was that evening in attendance on the Queen, heard sufficient of their plan of operations, to make her very desirous of urging to

Mary De la Pole, the necessity of her instant flight; but vain were her repeated attempts to quit the Royal presence, or to inform her brother of the dangers that surrounded his mistress. Margaret, as if informed of her desire to be absent, and determined to torment her, was in such unusual good humour, and had so many little employments for the fair De Courcy, that she was obliged, with unspeakable regret, to behold the return of Lord Suffolk to his mansion, without a possibility of accomplishing her wishes.

Passing near the anti-room of the King, she beheld Almerick, and waving her hand for him to follow her, passed forward into the Palace Garden, whither, as soon as he could, unobserved, withdraw himself from the gay circle he was surrounded by, he followed his sister, who informed him, that the following night had been proposed by the Queen, and agreed to by Lord



Suffolk, to take Mary to Pembroke Castle, where it was determined she should give her hand to the Earl, as the only means that could induce him, any longer to lend his aid to a party wherein Lord Suffolk was concerned or trusted, for he had that day at the council hinted pretty openly his disapprobation of his conduct; nor were they without fears that he had informed the king his brother, of some private anecdotes but little likely to suit the interest of Margaret or her prime minister.

With difficulty did Ellen restrain his impatience while she informed him of her discovery; so ardent was his desire to behold Mary, and entreat her to let him save her from such base designs by protecting her to the house of his uncle, the Duke of Norfolk; nor was he perhaps so totally destitute of vanity, as not to entertain a hope that when she was once from beneath the roof of her imperious father, she might



be induced to constitute him her sole protector.

“ But how is this interview to be effected, Almerick ?” demanded Ellen, “ Know you not, that the night wears fast towards the tenth hour, is not the Earl returned to his Palace, and will it be easy for you to gain admittance, who are of all others the most proscribed.”

I know too well the difficulties which attend me Ellen, but they may not be insurmountable. Near where the eastern turret of proud Suffolk's mansion overhangs the Avon, I have observed a winding path that leading through the bosom of the stupendous rock, threatens unavoidable destruction, even to the active kids, the only living creatures that venture to ascend its craggy sides : thither will I bend my steps, who knows but fortune, weary of persecuting De Courcy, may bring the beauteous

to Mary the lattice; oft as I have rested in the barge beneath have I there beheld her, when unconscious of being observed she has poured forth her sorrows to the ear of night: but hark! who passes near the bower? be concealed Ellen, it is the voice of the gay De Valence and his revellers. I would not they beheld you!

The strangers past the bower, apparently without observing that any one was within it; and Almerick, after conducting his sister by a private path, took his road to the winding way among the rocks of the Avon.

With difficulty, and not without infinite danger, did he ascend the rugged side, which projecting over the rapid stream that rolled beneath, threatened him with instant destruction. The goats, terrified at the unusual sound of human footsteps, which never ventured to invade their inaccessible retreat, fled at the echo of his footsteps, while the

voices of the vassals in the court beneath him, made him apprehensive of being discovered; he rested a little below the casement, which was indeed for about the space of eight feet, rendered alike both by nature and art utterly inaccessible. The accustomed light beamed through the apartments of Mary, and soon he heard the sound of her well known voice, in earnest conference with Anna. The subject was of her intended journey, and both regretted that she had so long delayed her flight till every possibility of effecting it was lost.

At length Almerick, who had delayed to speak, lest some unexpected sound should cause them to spread alarm through the Castle, heard her desire her attendant to shut the casement. "Ah! debar me not," he exclaimed, "the joy of beholding you! Let not Almerick depart unheard?"

The arm of Anna rested suspended

on the open lattice “ did I not hear the voice of a stranger,” she cried.

“ Whom do you speak to, Anna,” exclaimed her gentle mistress, rising and placing herself beside her ; “ how lovely is the night, how tranquil does every object appear but me.”

“ Be cautious, Lady : mark you not that form there, where the moon beams rests upon the rock ; and see it moves this way ; either mine eye deceives me, or it should be the figure of a man. I will speak to it, say stranger who thou art, or what thy errand here at this late hour, knowest thou that venturing thy rash footing on these rocks, thou hazardest thy destruction ! Say thy purpose ?”

“ No stranger, maid, intrudes upon the solitude of your revered Lady.”

“ Mary started, ah say ! may I not hope that she will remember De Courcy” !

“ De Courcy ! is it possible, can it be really you, alas ! what dangers must

you have encountered to ascend this eminence? I tremble to reflect on them."

"Fear not for me, beloved Mary; think on the dangers that surround you, and resolve to fly them; this hand shall guide you, and your faithful Anna, through the paths I have ere now, explored; this arm while it has power to wield a sword shall guard you. The Duchess of Norfolk, your illustrious kinswoman will rejoice to receive the daughter of her noble kinswoman, and, in her society, who shall dare to attach error to the unblemished name of Mary De la Pole. Ah! recollect the happy, happy days of our first friendship. Not thus you doubted then, nor feared to trust yourself with him whose glory is to be your servant, when in the ruined halls of Monmouth's tower, we met in unsuspecting, undisguised confidence."

"Let not De Courcy think that confidence diminished, or that I mean to refuse the offered aid. I can indeed, do

so no longer ; yet hear me Almerick ; not till the morning after to-morrow, am I to leave these walls. The Earl has, since his return from the palace, so far changed his purpose, for what reason I know not, nor is it material to ask. His will must here be unquestioned. This night return you to your chamber, and at the hour of ten to-morrow night I meet you here behind the Castle walls, where half way from the basis of the rock, you may have noticed three steps formed by the hand of the laborious peasant : a private passage opens from the lower courts. On this side of the building appear to-morrow as usual, let not for worlds the indignation of your mind appear before the vigilant eye of the haughty Margaret, even the most trivial circumstance will be sufficient to awaken her scrutinizing observations : thanks for this unlooked for service, and so farewell !—



“ Good night, sweet maid : to-morrow  
Fail not at the appointed hour.”

“ Alas! you will, I fear, mistake  
your footing, see the moon rises apace,  
O, why so long did I detain you here,  
I pray you to begone, we shall listen  
till we hear you are safe at the bottom  
of the pathway.

No, I entreat you do not, the wind  
is rising bleakly from the North ; retire,  
I beg you ; once again farewell ! let  
not your resolution fail at the appointed  
hour.

“ Fear not, but I will keep my promise,  
and may good angels guide you,  
for full of dangers are the way you  
tread.”

Mary and her companion kept their  
station, at the lattice, till the sound of  
his steps reverberated through the hollows  
of the rock, were lost in distance ;  
nor did they then retire to rest, but



to concert the means to leave the Castle unobserved: but fruitless were their plans for the accomplishment of that which fortune had decreed should not be effected, and little did either apprehend, when they bade adieu, the many revolving moons that should take their course through the wide expanse of heaven, ere they should meet again.

The day began to dawn already over the distant hills before the necessary arrangements were completed; and, fearful of being heard, in her return to her chamber, Anna slumbered upon the sofa of her mistress, while herself feeling but little inclination to indulge repose, and possessing a strong desire to know the destiny of her fair kinswoman, the Lady Beatrice Mowbray, seated herself to peruse the remaining of her manuscripts.

## CHAPTER X.

"Of all afflictions ever taught as yet ;  
 Sure 'tis the hardest lesson to forget ;  
 Unequalled task, its passion to resign,  
 For hearts so touch'd, so pierc'd, so lost as mine.  
 E'er such a soul regains its peaceful state,  
 How often must it love, how often hate ?  
 How often hope, repent, despair, regret,  
 Conceal, disdain, do all things but forget."

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THE continuation of the luckless  
 fate of Magneville, was written by the  
 pen of the Countess, in the following  
 words : before the dawn of day the  
 heavy trampling of the horses in the  
 court, reminded me that Magneville  
 and my Lord were on that morning to  
 depart for Bewdly Castle, and I arose  
 to bade them an adieu. The meeting  
 with Hugh was not pleasant, but the

presence of the Earl, and his own respectful behaviour, served in a great measure to lessen the embarrassment which I found it was utterly impracticable wholly to subdue: The repast was short and in less than an hour they departed, long before Beatrice awoke from a night of repose, which I had the unspeakable satisfaction to observe, had contributed more to restore her to herself, than our most sanguine hopes could have expected.

She soon observed the absence of Lord Suffolk, and enquired whither he was gone; "He has," replied I "this morning, set out in company with Hugh Magneville for Bewdly Castle."

"Then you and I together," said she "with a look of much expression, have driven him from Stratford."

"It is an honor, Beatrice, that I claim no share in, and I beg you will not propagate that I am so inhospitable a

hostess, as to deprive Lord Suffolk of his guest."

She shook her head, as intimating how well she comprehended that it was merely for the purpose of avoiding her, that Magneville had left us, but I found an opportunity ere many days elapsed to acquaint her with the real motive of their visit to Bewdly. Hugh was fortunate enough to be successful in his suit, and with the welcome news returned with the Earl to Stratford in something less than a month, Beatrice at first listened to his proposals with satisfaction, and peace seemed once more likely to return to our little party; which, till these events had never known unhappiness.

But in the midst of this blest dream of felicity, the health of Beatrice began visibly to decline in a very alarming degree. Too long she had let concealment, like a worm, in the bud feed on her damask cheek, and pined in thought:

nor was it even the offered hand of the amiable Magneville, that could now restore the gentle maid, to the wishes of her anxious family. She put a decided negative on his future pretensions, and candidly (whilst she confessed her unabated regard) acknowledged that she could not do his heart so great a violence as to accept the hand he offered from compassion, or at the most esteem.

At this passage the narrative was too much defaced to be rendered legible, but these were sufficient reasons to justify the alteration of her sentiments, it is more than probable they were not the only ones. Beatrice, had of late remarked the cool, the sometimes mortifying indifference, that even then began to be, by far too discernible in the conduct of Lord Suffolk to her sister. She had observed, too, the efforts it cost Magneville, to conceal a passion which he could not subdue, and felt that he

wished to hasten his own marriage, in order to create another, and, if possible, a stronger bar than that which already subsisted between him and the Countess; but the Lady Beatrice, whom refinement of sentiment taught to consider the happiness of Magneville before her own, determined, by no means of hers, to render even futurity hopeless, by making him the brother-in-law of her he loved: but, by nobly declining to accept the vows he offered, leave him at liberty, if death should free the Countess, to hope for the attainment of a heart so every way congenial to his own. Having once resolved, she adhered, with unshrinking firmness, to her determination; which, by the effects it produced, proved that it was founded in error. The Countess of Suffolk, now that she could no longer regard Magneville as an intended brother, felt all the delicacy of her situation, in being almost hourly, and that



too frequently alone in his company, for he hardly ever quitted the anti-chamber of Beatrice (for whom he really felt anxiety equal to the high esteem he most sincerely paid to her merits). The Countess was much confined ; and, as to the Earl, who found the dullness of a sick chamber but very little suited to his fancy, he had of late become generally a truant to his house

Magneville, thus circumstanced, soon felt the danger of his situation. He spoke to the Countess with averted eyes, with hesitation, and embarrassment. His tongue had once, in an ill fated hour, betrayed the painful secret of his soul, and social and unreserved friendship was no more.

Ere many weeks, the beauteous Beatrice expired in the arms of Lady Suffolk, during one of the very frequent excursions of her Lord ; by all regretted, but by her deplored with most unceasing sorrow, Magneville shed



on her early tomb the tear of unfeigned regret, and shared in the woes of her he loved and pitied: but, while the rigid voice of honor forbade him the soft, the benevolent task of soothing into peace, while many a gallant youth contemned, for him, to bear the indifference of the lovely Beatrice, in secret moaned the untimely blow that had deprived the world of so much grace and beauty.

The Lady Suffolk, who every hour looked for the too long protracted return of her Lord, past the sad tedious days in almost total seclusion. But week rolled after week, and still he came not; until absolute necessity compelled her, in compliance with the rules of hospitality, to appear again in the hall, and do the honors of the Castle. The unfortunate Magneville, thus circumstanced, found it a task too difficult to smother his ill-stored attachment, except by flight; and he deter-

mined no longer to procrastinate it ; but, taking a hasty and embarrassed farewell of the Lady Suffolk, bade an adieu to Stratford. An event she at once regretted and rejoiced at ; for ever welcome to her had been the society of the amiable, the lamented, the unhappy Magneville, had not the peculiarity of their situations rendered him an improper companion for the wife of Suffolk.

Wandering through the county of Warwick ; “ at times, alas ! not in his perfect mind,” for constant sorrow was his sole companion, he asked for shelter for the night at the Priory of Saint Ethenwald’s. The Abbot proved to be his uncle, recently returned from a mission, which had employed him for some years, in the island of Cyprus ; who, doubly authorised by his station, and the ties of kindred, questioned Magneville on the occasion of his visible

disquietudes and wanderings. He briefly owned the cause ; owned and lamented it, but acknowledged that he could not bring himself to repent the sin of loving Lady Suffolk, though reason pointed out to him the enormity of the offence. The pious Father soothed his sorrows, and gained at once his confidence and esteem. For the first moment since he quitted Stratford, he experienced within his bosom the faint dawnings of tranquillity. Day after day he delayed his departure, for his strength was exhausted, his spirits lost ; and, finding no longer an inducement to continue in a world that now had lost all power to interest his heart, the once gay, lively, and engaging Magneville, assumed the cowl ; and, in the Priory of St. Ethenwald, exchanged his name for that of Father Gregory.

But the delusions of a monastic life could not be expected so suddenly to gain a lasting empire over the mind of

a man ever most warmly attached to society, and whose feeling heart expanded, with unlimited benevolence, to every human being. Restless and discontented, the worthy Abbot beheld him pining under afflictions that he could not heal, and which inactivity rendered doubly poignant. He reproached him not; he remonstrated not with him with the rigid severity too common to his profession; but, by the exertion of his interest, procured permission for him to take a journey to the holy See of Rome; in hopes that absence from the land, which contained her he still loved with unabated ardour, would, by giving a new turn to his ideas, cure him of his unfortunate attachment. Magneville had much desired, and embraced this opportunity with enthusiasm; but vain was the experiment; for still the loved idea of the too lovely Countess haunted his memory, and denied him rest.

After an absence of four years, he returned again to England; but, in spite of his resolutions to the contrary, he could not resist the temptation of passing through Stratford, to enquire, in disguise, into the situation of the Countess; for the unamiable and ambitious disposition of her Lord, had excited the fearful presage that it would not be a happy one. Reposing on one of the benches of a neighbouring Convent's hall, he heard, by accident, that one of the Fathers was that night to attend at Stratford Castle (to which their Order owed its foundation), to say mass at the tomb of the Countess; the prayer for whose departed soul was being even then fixed with solemnity to one of the pillars of the porch\*, by the hands of the aged Friars, and which solicited the oraisons of strangers for

\* It was customary to affix prayers on a pillar for the repose of the dead, desiring strangers to join them,—Vide JERNINGHAM.

her eternal rest. With desperate resolution, the dire effects of agonized despair, he besought and obtained permission to supply the place of the good Monk, and once more found himself beneath the roof of the Earl of Suffolk. Alas! how changed!

Notwithstanding his habit, the Earl, who attended at the obsequies, and discovered more appearance of real grief than could have been expected from the recent tenor of his conduct, recollected his long absent friend. His mind was, like Magneville's, at that time the seat of affliction; nor had he, much as his heart was practised in dissembling, the art to conceal it. The unsuspecting Magneville deplored, as he believed, the death of Lady Suffolk; nor did her unworthy Lord undeceive him, while he wept himself over the tomb of Ellen of Monmouth. Magneville pitied his situation, and, at his earnest entreaty, consented once



again to become the inmate of Stratford Castle: but, as the Earl ever appeared to experience the most acute affliction when the name of the Lady Suffolk met his ear, and acknowledged their unhappiness to have originated in his own errors, it was a subject that was rarely, if ever named.

Long before Mary had concluded her mournful story the sun was risen, in resplendant glory, above the hills of Sandon, and warned her to descend into the hall, to await the appearance of the Earl, her father. But, fortunately for her, he was already gone to attend the Queen; a circumstance that saved her from the painful necessity of dissembling, but, spite of his endeavours to appear contented, Almerick had too much cause to fear discovery, not to be evidently embarrassed: a circumstance that was perfectly sufficient to determine those, from whom he most desired it to be



concealed, who the Lady really was with whom he was tête-à-tête in the bower the preceding night. Nor was this the only mortification he was destined to experience. It was now whispered abroad that the purpose of Margaret's journey, to Pembroke Castle, was to join the forces that had been recently collected in that part of the kingdom, and chiefly under the command of Sir Owen Tudor, the husband of the beauteous Catharine of France, the widow of the gallant Henry the Fifth; whose residence in Wales gave him almost unbounded influence in the adjoining parts of the country.

They were now waiting the arrival of Margaret, near Brecknock, in order to give battle to the Yorkists, then beginning to be in open force; too strong not to create alarming apprehensions. The youthful nobles of the Court were vying with each other who should be first to offer his sword in defence of the

King they loved, in the anti-room of Henry's hall of audience; which resounded only with the congratulations that each bestowed upon his friend, as they heard the posts of honor that were assigned to the brave and loyal.

“ Soon may we hope to draw our swords together in the cause of Henry,” exclaimed De Courcy, with enthusiastic warmth, to the young Count of Luxembourg, while his heart beat high with the fair prospect of renown; for, as yet, his own had contended only in the manly exercises of pleasure.

“ I know not that,” replied the Count, with indifference; “ let those who love contention court it in the fields of war. For me, I own the smiles of beauty have far greater charms.”

“ And can you hope to enjoy them with such sentiments as these, my Lord.”—“ And openly avowed too,” said Edward Nevil. “ Trust me, in the cause of our illustrious Sovereign,

the Ladies are too sincerely interested to love the man who will not draw his sword in his defence."

"You, Sir," replied the Count, with a triumphant air, which plainly intimated that the fair Ellen De Courcy's preference was a subject on which he reflected with no little pride. "You, Sir, who have hitherto had so little to expect from their favor, will, perhaps, benefit by our disgrace."

"Cease friends," exclaimed De Courcy, fearful that Neville's spirit would ill brook the boastful insinuation of his acknowledged rival; "let not contention reach the ear of Henry. If the Count shuns the honor of the war, his own will be the loss; and you, Neville, whose soul, congenial to my own, knows not how to shrink from danger, be henceforth dearer to De Courcy's heart than ever."

Neville seized with joy the offered hand of De Courcy. Solemnly, on their

swords, they took the vows of a brother in arms; and gladly had the latter hailed him by that name, instead of John of Luxembourg; but Ellen's choice decreed him to despair.

The Count of Luxembourg frowned on this new formed league of friendship. "Remember," said he, "De Courcy, the promise you once gave to make your sister mine. As you respect the honor of your word, look that it does not be forgotten."

"It is already forgotten, Count," replied the youthful Knight, with some impatience. "It is true I promised Ellen to your arms; but it was to the friend of Henry (a name you boasted then); nor will she, I trust, wed one who ceases (for what cause I neither ask or care) to adhere to his fortunes."

"Remember, Sir, before you counsel her, I am not used to avoid an enemy, or overlook an insult; but that I hold it far beneath me to explain the

motives for my conduct. I could perhaps prove that the fear of even hosts of foes, would keep not John of Luxembourg from the fields of warfare, neither shall aught on earth induce him to draw his weapon, where he condemns the cause with as much zeal, perhaps, as any of his subjects, nay, even as yourself. I love and honor Henry Plantagenet, but the claims of York, in my ideas, are just, nor will I fight against them."

"Even at your pleasure, Sir, but mark we well,—Ellen De Courcy weds not with the man that draws his sword against my Sovereign, nor can her brother overlook this avowal, or hold farther intercourse with the Count of Luxembourg.

The rising clouds of dissipation darkened upon the brows of John of Luxemborg, but their contentions ended here. Almerick soon after quitted the chamber in company with

Neville, to give some necessary directions concerning the order of the march that was to take place on the ensuing day, and the Count entered the presence chamber, to enjoy the opportunity of conversing with Ellen De Courcy, in the absence of her brother. Almerick, divided between the claims of love and duty, knew not on what to resolve ; the evening before when he saw Mary, he was a stranger to the intentions of the Queen, and as to gaining an interview in the intervening time, before he was to meet her on the rocks behind the castle, it was impracticable ; he had it not, therefore, in his power to make any alterations in the arrangement, yet, how was it possible he should conduct her to the Duke, her uncle, in Cornwall, and attend the Queen to Brecknock, he sought for Ellen to entreat her to become the companion of Mary's flight, who, contrary to what he expected had



not once enquired with her usual affectionate solicitude, in the success of his last night's expedition ; indeed, so far from it, she had taken the most evident pains to avoid entering into any conversation with him, except in public, and on common topics, a circumstance that ceased to surprise him, when, entering the Royal apartments, he beheld her, with vexation, apart from her fair companions, and in earnest conference with the Count John of Luxembourg.

Soon after his entrance they separated, nor did the looks of Ellen, when she joined the circle, indicate the least uneasiness or emotion ; no opportunity of speaking to her upon the subject nearest his heart, offered itself that evening, as Margaret retired early, but as she followed through the crowded gallery, he whispered that he wished to speak in private with her.

“ Of what, my brother ? ” she exclaimed with eagerness.



“ I cannot explain myself here Ellen, but only this,—listen no more to John of Luxembourg, not as you value the recently retrieved honor of your family : to be again suspected would be worse than death.”

“ I understand you not ; how is dishonor joined with the name of John of Luxembourg ?”

“ Meet me an hour hence in——, No admit me at your apartments, I will, at that time await you there, and till then, oblige me by avoiding him ; at present I have business of importance that demands my presence.”

“ Yet say, does the fair De la Pole this night, forsake the mansion of the Earl ?”

“ I will inform you when we meet, it chiefly rests on you, you must assist me Ellen, or she is lost.”

Fair Ellen sighed ; and with a sigh that seemed to say if so, she pitied him, bade him adieu, but affection was so

interwoven with her nature, that Almerick suspected not, she was bidding him a long farewell. There was now but one hour to elapse, before he was to repair to the east side of Stratford Castle; his horses were already in waiting, and he sought for Ellen to entreat her to accompany him, but he sought her in vain, her apartments were open, but she was not there, though her woman told him they every moment expected her. Disappointed in his expectations, he was descending from thence, and met upon the stairs the Lady Eleanor Spencer, who told him she had that moment passed the Count of Luxembourg with Lady Ellen, who took the way to the Colonnade, that opened on the terrace to the south of the Palace.

Stung with indignation at the deception she had practised, he hastily retired, but by the time he had reached the banks of the Avon, had forgot his anger

in the sweet hope of meeting Mary De la Pole ; with a light step he ascended the winding path, and uninterrupted, gained the appointed spot, where the three steps, mentioned by Mary, attracted his notice. Through a small aperture in the rock, he distinguished [the faint glimmering of torch-light, and guided by the weak ray, discovered that a little door, hitherto unobserved, led, by a flight of narrow steps to the other side of Lady Mary's chamber ; the courts of the Castle, of which he could command a view, were filled with the numerous retainers of the Earl of Suffolk, who, as they passed with their lighted torches hastily to and fro, seemed to indicate some business of more than usual importance ; he strove to discover, by their words, the occasion of their haste, but distance denied him that satisfaction, neither could he discover the usual lights in Mary's chamber, and he dared not

ascend higher, lest he should, by that means, miss the fair object of his hopes.

After a considerable time spent in the most anxious suspense, the dreadful idea occurred to him, that as the private door was unbarred, which had evidently been done recently from the inside, they must have ventured forth before the appointed hour, and, uncertain of the dangerous path they had to explore, had, too probably fallen from the precipice, that, rising upwards of fifty feet perpendicular from the sea, must, by one eventful step, have plunged them into its tremendous abyss.

Scarcely in his senses, he descended to the beach, expecting, at every step, to behold the mangled form of his lovely Mary, but the boatmen were still sleeping on their oars beneath the rock, and the resplendent beams of the moonlight, which played in the

gently rolling stream, shewed him that he had alarmed himself without a cause.

With somewhat like impatience, he awoke his slumbering assistants, for Almerick had not leisure, at the moment, to reflect, that it was impossible to make them feel the same interest in the success of the adventure that he did.

After bidding them to be prepared, he once more turned his steps, in order to reascend the rock, when the trampling of horses made him pause to listen. The fear of a discovery made him fancy an enemy in every sound, and, as he stood in the attitude of defence, suddenly emerging from the deep shadows of Stratford Castle, he beheld the approach of a lady, mounted on a palfry, and a young maid, whose light robes floated on the gale, walked by her side, and seemed to listen for the approach either of some they wished, or feared to meet.

Forgetting how improbable it was for Mary to come thus attended, he doubted not that it was her, and had he done so, every doubt must have ceased, when the attendant said, in the softest accents, “do not fear madam,—I hear him coming.”

Almerick, transported, sprang forward, and earnestly intreated her to alight, but, with a fearful start, she shunned his offered aid, and the attendant begged him first to prepare his servants, when a young Cavalier, of noble mien, mounted on a fleet courser, joined them from the covert of a neighbouring wood, and placing the lady before, was riding off with the utmost speed.

Almerick, who still doubted not but it was Mary, and that her Father having, by some method gained a knowledge of their intentions, had taken this method to counteract them. Notwithstanding he was on foot, attacked the



cavalier with fury, at the moment that Anna appeared on the rocks, and endeavoured, by calling on his name, to engage his attention, he beheld her, and redoubling his efforts to detain the stranger, called to her to retire into the boat, for that he would either die or regain her lady.

The fair maid, wringing her hands in sorrow, retired from the sight, and Almerick, almost overcome by the unequal combat, seized, at that moment, the horse of a servant that had joined the cavalier, and, fighting as they rode, the stranger spurred his horse towards the forest, followed by Almerick, and were, ere many minutes had elapsed, far from the castle walls.



## CHAPTER XI.

“If thou art my offence, I have sinned indeed;  
E’en to a vast and numberless account :  
For, from the time that I beheld thee first,  
My soul has not one minute been without thee.  
Still hast thou been my wish, my constant thought,  
Like light, the daily blessing of my eyes,  
And the dear dream of all my sweetest slumbers.”

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SEVERE and ardent was the contest, and various the turns of fortune, between De Courcy and the stranger Knight, but the former might reasonably be supposed to possess a very eminent advantage, by the circumstance of his adversary being encumbered by the weight of his fair burthen; he had, at least, an equal advantage from being totally unable to conjecture to what

part of the country the object of his pursuit designed to bend their devious way, for nearly the space of two hours they continued to ride through dark, and almost inaccessible woods, where the luxuriant spreading of the wild unrestrained branches, compelled them to desist from their otherwise unceasing hostilities.

Yet had De Courcy's arm prevailed, and forced from the stranger the lovely object of their contention, for, overcome with fatigue, it was with extreme difficulty he could maintain himself in the saddle, and though he still continued to parry the repeated strokes of Almerick's arm, it was with evidently diminished force. Sheltered beneath the ruins of an ancient and ruined pile, on which, as they emerged from the wood, they broke upon the sudden, they beheld some persons, who, by the roughness of their uncouth forms, (alone rendered visible by the glare of

their torches) they conjectured to be mariners, nor could he doubt of their having been posted there by the unknown cavalier, in order to assist him in conveying Mary, the more effectually beyond the probable reach of those, whom, there could be no doubt, would leave no methods unessayed to recover her.

Animated by the now (if possible) more evident ill intentions of the Knight, he strove, but alas! in vain, to spur his wearied courser onward: the poor animal was unable to proceed, and De Courcy found himself under the necessity of turning him loose, and pursuing his adversary as he might, a circumstance that, no doubt much contributed to the assistance of his adversary's views, who, lashing forward, his gay fiery steed soon reached the people, who, it was evident, did but wait his coming.

Lifting the lady lightly from his

horse, he placed her in the arms of one of them, and with his sword unsheathed, awaited on the beach, till he beheld her safe within the little bark that waited to receive them; at that moment he saw De Courcy rapidly advancing; and instantly following his attendants on board, he commanded, without loss of time, to put from shore.

Distracted with the the torturing pangs of jealousy and resentment, De Courcy loudly called on him to return, and put their quarrel to a fair decision. If he would not become a disgrace to Knightly honor, "leave," said he, "your followers, return and meet me upon equal terms—thy single hand to mine."

"I fight not De Courcy," replied the stranger, "with the brother of her who will (God willing,) e're many hours shall pass, be mine for ever. If we, perchance, should ever meet again, it will, I trust, be on terms less hostile ;

believe me, of the noble maid you love, I have not, (even in thought) attempted to deprive you: be Mary De la Pole, the wife of De Courcy, but let the beauteous Ellen share my fortunes."

The sword fell from the hand of Almerick, as lost in astonishment, he repeated to himself the words of him, whose well remembered voice proclaimed to be no other than the Count John of Luxembourg, a name once heard with pleasure, now recollected with indignant scorn, and was it then possible that Ellen had so far forgot the allegiance which she owed to Henry, as to accept the offered hand and fortunes of a Yorkist; how should he dare again to meet the eye of his Sovereign; how hope again to enjoy his confidence, while, even in the very cause of his greatest and most formidable enemy, he had so dear a relative. How, in the hour of battle, could he wield the sword,

when its first fatal stroke might be, perchance, to the heart of Ellen's chosen Lord

But there were other reflections even still more severely painful to his tortured mind. Where now, alas! was Mary De la Pole? who should say but that, unable longer to withstand the united powers of Margaret, and the unrelenting Earl of Suffolk, she might have yielded to their importunities, and was, ere this, on her way to the envied Pembroke castle. Perchance too, she might, (suspecting him of falsehood) have gone, without reluctance, for to what other cause than changeful caprice, could she ascribe failing to attend her at the appointed hour, or how regard his having desired Anna to retire from the [rocks, behind the castle, without one single question concerning the situation of her gentle mistress.

Occupied on every side with the



most painful reflections, exhausted with fatigue, and every sense absorbed in misery, he threw himself upon the moss grown bank beneath the frowning ruins of the half-fallen watch towers, and often did his ear catch the sad and dismal cries of the distressed mariner, who, for a scanty pittance, braved their fury. Long did it seem before the dawn of morning, yet, for the happiness of De Courcy, it arrived too soon, for by its earliest beams, his eyes, though indistinctly, marked the white fluttering sails of the far distant vessel, that bore his sister to a distant land. But anger was no more, for in its place regret was substituted, and a fond tear of affectionate remembrance, that did not disgrace even the cheek of a soldier, started unbidden, as he cast a heart-felt sigh towards the lovely, though in considerate Ellen; he thought of Mary too, and despair did not so totally possess his soul as it had done some

few sad hours before, when disappointment and indignant rage had banished every influence of hope. She had told him, he remembered, that her intended journey was not to commence before that morning; was there not reason then to indulge the flattering idea, that she, who had openly avowed her aversion to it, would find reason to delay its performance as long as possible, and might he not then, happily, yet arrive at Stratford, in time to clear his conduct, and assist her flight.

Such is the mind of man, thus ever prone to hope, even in despite of probability, and such, at that moment, was the self-deluded Almerick de Courcy. He knew he must be distant upwards of sixteen miles, and that he had no horse to expedite his journey; but few are the impediments that present themselves to one, who looks with fond and sanguine hope towards the accomplishment of a heartfelt wish.

His first grand object was to discover in what part of the country he was then, for he was well convinced the route he had the night before pursued the Count of Luxembourg, were far from the main roads, and might, most probably, render his distance from the Court, even more than he conjectured it to be.

The event proved as he feared, for on consulting the inscription, or rather the part of one that still remained over the high arched entrance, he found it was the castle of Montaignu, once the fair mansion of the noble Roger Fitz-Count, Earl of Montgomery, who, maintaining the cause of Richard, when the usurping Bolingbroke dared, even in open violation of his vowed allegiance, to wage presumptuous war with his annointed Sovereign, had bravely lost his life in the defence of the Royal cause, and to whose worth and loyalty, even those towers, de-

molished by the vengeful hand of the usurper, proved a lasting honor. Almerick discovered that, by avoiding the woods, and following the direct roads, he might diminish much of his journey which, even, though he had possessed the eagles swiftness, had to him been tedious ; with a mind fraught with many an anxious doubt, he bent his way towards Stratford, and when arrived within a trifling distance of the Court, the mingled sounds of warlike instruments struck on his ear, and spoke the departure of the Queen for Brecknock.

But here he was deceived, an alteration as unexpected as unwelcome had taken place in Margaret's arrangements ; to prevent the return of the Duke of York from Ireland, with his army, a considerable part of the forces had been assembled on the borders of Wales, as it was strongly suspected he meditated a landing in those parts ; nor was the report spread without founda-

tion ; such certainly had once been his design, but finding the attempt likely to be unattended with success, he secretly landed at Chester, from whence, marching forward to Litchfield, his adherents planted the banners of the white rose upon the Castle gates, nor was it long ere he beheld his warlike bands augmented even beyond his own most sanguine expectations. Morfred De Wolloran, Lord of St. Aubert, joined him with eighteen hundred vassals in arms, a few days after his arrival, together with Gifford, Lord De Warrenne ; William, Earl of Eren ; the noble Richard De Clare, Baron of Wooten ; Hugh De Ferres, of Northalerton, and a gallant host ; Sir Harry Piercy, with a numerous and well appointed army ; young Norman D'Arcy, with many noble gentlemen, who, unsolicited, offered him their ready aid, in the recovery of his birthright ; the powerful Godfrey of the isles too, with his

five hundred archers, left his native seat, to join the standards of the Duke of York, and assist the cause he loved. Here Richard pitched his tents for a short period, at once to rest his army, and recruit it, by giving, to all such as were inclined to favor him, an opportunity to throw off the yoke of Lancaster.

If Richard of York, however, proved too successful in his attempt to alienate the subjects of Henry from their duty, there were not wanting many, - and even those of the most powerful nobles, who still adhered to the cause of their amiable Sovereign: amongst these William Lord Dacres, who, after sending advices to the Queen of the unexpected appearance of the Duke of York, and beseeching her to hasten with what forces she could collect to stop his projected progress towards the capital, secretly, himself, prepared to give a check to his already formidable power.



With an army of no more than fourteen hundred men at arms, he boldly met him on the plains of Atterstone; an attack so unexpected and so daring, struck astonishment throughout the numerous ranks of the Yorkists, who had but little suspected that so small a number would have ventured to encounter an army every way so superior. From this specimen of loyal attachment to the cause of Lancaster, they began to augur the adherents of Henry to be far more numerous than they had hitherto been taught to imagine; and the consequence was, that not a few began already to repent of having too rashly entered in this daring project.

Obstinate and bloody was the battle fought on that day between the contending houses of the Yorks and Lancasters. The gallant Duke, who was himself a host, rushed, like the rapid whirlwind, through the ranks of war,

and, hand to hand, encountered the no less brave Lord Dacres. Thrice was he beaten down upon his knee by his well skilled antagonist; and Edward, the rising hope of the noble Hastings, who that day claimed the honorable post of guarding the standard, fell, gallantly fighting, by his leader's side.

Innumerable were the brave and hardy veterans whose mangled bodies strewed the field of death, and made the widowed matron tremble oft as she heard repeated the name of the fatal plains of Atterstone. The havoc on both sides was truly dreadful; but a too well aimed arrow from the cross-bow of the young Earl of Devonshire, carried, at the same moment, death to the heart of the Lord Dacres, and ruin to his host. The brave and angry Norman Barton, his undaunted kinsman, endeavoured, with energy, to rally the remaining forces, by calling

on them aloud, not only to remember the glorious cause they fought for the defence of, but to revenge the death of his uncle, their illustrious leader: but vain was all his courage: vain, alas! his oft repeated efforts. The fall of one of such redoubtable prowess, inspired the Yorkists with redoubled vigour. The line was forced in several places, and the troops, compelled to make a precipitate retreat into the Castle; followed so closely by the victorious enemy, that it was not without the utmost difficulty they could gain time sufficient to raise the drawbridge, and prevent their entering with them.

The fortunes of the day, though in the end terminating in favor of the Duke, had nearly proved his ruin; for more than half his followers lay extended on the death fraught plain. His own opinion was, by no means to attempt any thing more till they were recruited by fresh reinforcements; but

to return to Litchfield, from whence they were but the distance of a few hours march, and there fortify the Castle, till a more numerous band of followers should enable him, with better expectations of success, to hazard a general battle.

The greater part of his friends acquiesced in the resolution; but the Lord Willoughby warmly entreated him not to let pass the golden opportunity that now lay before him: the soldiers, animated by their recent success, and, regarding it with the most credulous faith to be the unerring omen of future victory, were ready, to a man, to march at his command, whither so ever he might lead them on. "Check not, let me beseech your Grace," said the gallant veteran, "their untamed spirits. Give but the word to march, and, ere the glorious sun twice gilds the horizon, we will, God willing, meet

this Henry on equal, nay, perchance, superior footing."

The vassals of the Lord De Willoughby rent, with their loud applause, the echoing skies, and loudly cried, "towards London."

"Towards London be it then, my friends and brothers," replied the Duke, "I thank you for your love; nor will I doubt, from this so good beginning, of a happy issue. But rest we here to day; in the evening we will consign our brave companions, that now strew these plains, to honorable graves, and, with to-morrow's dawn, begin our march."

Harassed alike in body and in mind, De Courcy entered Stratford time enough to hear that Henry, in consequence of the Lord Dacre's overthrow, was on the moment of his departure for the metropolis, where his presence was judged indispensably necessary, to reanimate the hopes of those who au-

gured every danger from the sad event of that day's battle; and thither also did Margaret determine to attend him.

The amiable Henry, whose firm reliance on the fidelity of De Courcy, the base suggestions of his enemies, (who insinuated that his so sudden disappearance bespoke his having left the Royal party), had not power to alter, received him with every token of regard; and, with a degree of warmth somewhat unusual, remarked to the Queen, that there was now, he thought, a most unquestionable proof of his attachment to their interests. But stern and most evident displeasure lowered upon the lofty brow of Margaret; nor did it lower unobserved; although, perchance, unfeared. "You, good my Liege!" she answered haughtily, "may have, perchance, some greater cause for faith than we have: but trust me, to my poor judgment (though perhaps I err); it carries a dishonorable stain



to form even, and even in the very hour of rebellion too, a close alliance with King Henry's foes."

"I understand you not, my gentle Queen, replied her easy Lorl."

"Let Almerick de Courcy understand, my Liege," she answered with a frown, "that it but ill becomes him to be absent in an hour like this; still less so does the cause. Had the Lady Ellen wanted," and she smiled contemptuously, "greater protection than that of Margaret of Anjou, it might indeed be well to have offered her to the Count John of Luxembourg: otherwise I think it derogatory, and so thinks the Court in general."

"I hope, my Royal Mistress," answered De Courcy, while an indignant blush crimsoned his manly cheek, "than to believe the hand of Ellen could ever be proposed to the acceptance even of a Sovereign."

"To me it matters not, Sir, be it so

or not. You know my thoughts ; and I, perchance, read your's more clearly than may suit your interests. You may retire ; I have a council for the King."

Hard were such words for Almerick to endure ; but, from the wife of Henry Plantagenet, he would, if possible, have borne even greater scorn : yet, ere he went, he humbly sought permission to give the reason of his absence from the Court, and clear his honor from suspicions, from which his soul revolted with abhorrence. But, with a glance of rising anger, she forbid his prayer, and urged his instant absence. A command which her too gentle Lord, during the storm of passion, contradicted not.

Almerick, while the half checked tear of indignation glittered in his eyes, bowed, and retired to the anti-chamber, where he was joined by Nevil ; whose soul, if possible more interested

than his own in the elopement of the beautiful Ellen, could talk of her alone.

From him De Courcy learned that, missing her at the usual hour of attendance, the Queen had required the reason, and had sent to her apartments to command her presence in the chamber of state. The answer of her women, who were really unacquainted with her flight, that she had left her chamber late the night before with the Count of Luxembourg; and was soon after followed, as they believed, by Almerick, confirmed the late rumour, already spread, that they were departed secretly to the Duke of York. This doctrine the implacable Margaret, who ever bore to Almerick De Courcy most firm unaltered hatred, because he had dared to question, and not a little to disgrace the Earl of Suffolk, was endeavouring to convince the King of

his defection: who, contrary to all established custom, ventured for once to differ in opinion; and, though he pretended not to account for his absence, had just declared (though in the mildest terms), that he was certain both of his return and faith, at the same moment that he entered. And never did mortal man appear more unwelcome to Margaret; for, though no one was better than herself aware that they had need of every sword they could command, gladly would she have seen her dearest friends desert, even to the very standard of her enemy, rather than yield herself erroneous in her judgment.

Welcome as Nevil was to Almerick, his moments were too precious to be spared even to him. Telling him he was going to gain intelligence concerning Mary, he was about to leave the chamber, when an attendant entered to inform him that it was the King's desire he should wait his leisure there.

Never before had his commands arrived unwelcome; but it required now even more than human fortitude to obey them. "He will not yet be disengaged," said he, "I will hasten to the rocks. Who knows but fortune may for once be favorable: suffer me even yet to behold her, and clear myself from meriting her scorn."

"Whither do you go," exclaimed his friend, detaining him; "you rush on your destruction. Have you so soon forgot it is the pleasure of the King that you should wait him here?"

"If you are my friend withhold me not," he cried; "remind me not of aught that should detain me. O! Nevil, I have lost, this fatal night, more than the wealth of Europe could restore me."

"Too well, alas! my friend, I feel that loss: ah! how severely feel it; yet be not rash. Already (pardon the

expression) do you not stand suspected; and, at such an hour to disobey the recent command of Henry, might prove your ruin."

"Then let it be so; yet that, alas! is now impossible. It is already completed: robbed of the sister, whom my soul was proud to make her boast. For Ellen, amongst the fairest and most honorable, was still amongst the foremost. Deprived of the presence of the maid I worship; and, worst of all, suspected in my faith, what ills can now befall me. The torturing suspense my heart endures is more hard to endure than even his displeasure, which, witness for me Heaven, no allurements should willingly induce me to deserve."

"Then go not from this chamber: to overtake her must be now impossible."—"That is indeed the misery I fear. Not go... not strive to save.



Nevil, thou dost forget that even now, perchance, she chides my stay, and accuses me of being leagued with Margaret to betray her, even to the arms of Pembroke."

"Speak you then of the Lady Mary De la Pole."

"Certainly : whom else should occupy my every thought?"

"Your pardon ; but my whole soul, intent alone on Ellen, thought of her only. But say, what of the Lady Mary?"

"Her only hope of peace must be in flight ; and but last night I vowed (yet broke my promise) to guard her to the Duke of Norfolk's roof."

"If so, indeed," cried Nevil, with a heartfelt sigh, "I most sincerely pity you. Too well I know you could not keep that promise : but you saw her, did you not ; or knew, at least, of the proposed departure of the Earl, her father?"

“ I knew of nothing, Nevil. I know, alas ! too well, that Ellen’s conduct has ruined my best hopes of peace for ever.”

“ So has she those of Nevil, Alme-  
rick : yet it may be possible she is not  
gone ; for I was told by one I lately  
talked with, that Suffolk went alone.  
Instruct me in the path you named,  
and suffer me to be your advocate to  
plead (Heaven grant with happier for-  
tune than my own) in my friend’s  
cause, for you must not go hence.”

If there was on the earth a man to  
whom De Courcy would have entrusted  
a business of such wonderful concern,  
it was to Edward Nevil : yet even his  
entreaties had been unsuccessful, had  
not a message arrived, even at that  
moment, to say the King would speak  
to him in the next apartment ; and Al-  
merick, giving to his friend a descrip-  
tion of the path, that wound amongst  
the rocks behind Lord Suffolk’s Castle,

commended him to the Lady Mary, and bade him a farewell with deep reluctance.

Nevil, attentive to the instructions he had received, soon gained the spot he sought: but, alas! he found not the beauteous idol of De Courcy's soul. Though little bound by kindness to the haughty Earl, her father, it was not without much reluctance she had summoned resolution to forsake his roof; a resolution which nothing but to avoid being forced into a marriage she abhorred could have induced her to adopt. The day preceding the evening on which she had promised to accept De Courcy's aid, was passed in many an anxious thought, and often did her resolution fail. It was about the hour of eight, just as the evening closed, that a most furious knocking at the gates, announced the entrance of some person of note, and the unexpected voice of the Earl reached her

ear; as, with the hurried accents of impatience, he oft enquired for her, and, at the same time, ordered that his retinue should be in readiness to attend him from the Castle ere the hour of midnight.

A journey thus suddenly undertaken, and at such an hour, was at that time so unusual, that it is not extraordinary it should create no small astonishment throughout the household: for Mary, who conjectured that the discovery of her intended elopement could alone have caused so singular a circumstance, it was indeed alarming; and much was her apprehensions encreased, when an attendant came to say the Earl required her to attend him on the instant in his closet.

She arose, in order to obey the summons; but, trembling to encounter the weight of displeasure, again sunk, almost overcome with terror, on her seat, till the approach of her father recalled

her back to recollection. " Pardon me, my Lord," she cried, with faltering tongue, " I will attend you instantly."

" Nay, rise not, Mary," he replied; while, as she marked the traces on his brows, she read the perturbation of his thoughts; " I see you are alarmed; but calm your fears and answer me sincerely: great I know full well is the sacrifice I am about to ask; at least if you are, as your father has been, the votary of ambition."

She strove to speak, but utterance was denied her. She strove to say that she would sacrifice all for his pleasure, but she remembered De Courcy, and the words died on her trembling lips ere she could utter them. " I go, my daughter," said the Earl, " this night towards London. The cause that takes me thither, no matter what, will terminate in honor or in death. The

Commons ; may my heaviest curse light . . . . ; but it matters not, time presses ; they have impeached your father. Nay, do not weep, girl ;” and, as he marked the tears that stole in anguish down her face, he turned to hide his own, which started at the voice of truth, that told him he had not, by his tenderness, deserved them. “ Few will be now the friends,” he added, “ that will sue to share in Suffolk’s fortunes. That . . . that indeed is mortifying. Yet must I not appear to feel these things. My house must be the scene of courtly revelry, my halls must echo with the strains of mirth and minstrels, and the gay, thoughtless courtiers, crowd my banquets, who, in their hearts, would gladly see me crushed as low as their weak powers would have left themselves, but for the ill judged gifts of inconsiderate chance. This, Mary, must be your task. Seldom indeed have men the resolution to fly from youth and



gaiety, even though they hate their hosts. With me your fortunes must be doubtful: here, with the Royal Margaret, they are secure. Speak then your free decision: Will you continue here or share my destiny?"

"With you, my Lord; oh! let me go with you. Leave me not, I beseech you, here with Margaret."

"Noble-minded girl," exclaimed the Earl, "then I have yet one friend. Henceforward, Mary, it shall be my study to recompence this proof of your attachment; at present I would be alone, my child: my thoughts require leisure. Retire, and, on the expiration of the ensuing hour, be prepared to meet me in the hall, and bid a long adieu to this fair seat. And yet not long, perchance, may I be absent; soon may the miscreants, who dared to trifle with Edmund De la Pole, repent their rashness, and fix him but more firmly, even in still higher honors than

those they envy, because they merit not."

Mary sighed as she retired from the gallery; but she sighed not because she had promised to accompany her father, in an expedition that, to her foreboding mind, appeared but little better, or, at most, the certain omen of an approaching exile, even if no worse should follow. But it was a sigh, awakened by the still unabated ambition of the Earl, which even the utmost limits of aggrandisement could never satiate, nor misfortunes conquer.

Overwhelmed with sorrow she re-entered her chamber. Anna was absent, and little more than an hour to elapse before she must be gone; yet to no other could she confide the message that was to disappoint the expectations of De Courcy; for none but Anna were acquainted with the secret of their purposed meeting.

The good, the amiable Father Gre-

gory was not now the inhabitant of the Castle. He no sooner heard that the remains of his adored Countess were deposited in the holy chapel of our Lady of Walsingham, than he undertook a pilgrimage thither to pray, at the sainted shrine, for her repose. To him, whom three short months before she would have blushed to name a lover, Mary would now, without disguise, have owned her embarrassments, and relied on him, with security, for assistance: for much did she confide in the old adage, that

“ Pity never leaves the gentle breast  
Where love has been received a welcome guest.”

And well did Mary know that love, and most unfeigned benevolence, divided equally the sympathetic heart of Father Gregory. With a trembling hand she penned a billet for De Courcy, determined to deposit it near to the secret door upon the rocks; but the light steps of Anna, ascending to her

apartments, retired, as she hoped, from the necessity of adopting so hazardous a measure, “we have,” she cried, “no time to lose,—come with me this way Anna, and while my women are employed in preparation, we may pass, unobserved, the private door. De Courcy, is, by this time, most probably not far distant, nay, do not doubt my resolution. I do not forget my promise to the Earl, or mean to forfeit it.”

“Your pardon lady, if any look of mine implied a doubt, nor let me incur your displeasure if I own—I fear you may find reason to repent it.”

“I trust I shall not: yet even, though the event should prove so, the same means still are open to avoid the consequences; come, we shall be too late.”

They left the apartments on that side of the Castle, and entering a narrow gallery that, leading to the ancient

armoury, proceeded through a private pass, into a winding way, that formed below the chapel, led to the rocks that overhung the beach, and formed a safe retreat in times of danger; the door turned heavily on the grating hinges, and the cold air that issued in a stream from the caverns, struck damp and comfortless; the lamp, whose feeble rays cast an imperfect light, at length discovered a narrow flight of steps, which, they conjectured, would conduct them to the appointed spot, but finding they extended far beyond what they conjectured to be probable, they began to fear they had mistaken the way, and were about to return, when a loud, though distant clashing as of chains, below them caused them to fear the unexpected appearance of some wretched victim to revenge, who past his solitary days in that sad dwelling; pity, for the unfortunate urged their steps onward, but necessity called on

them to return, and yet, to check the impulse of the former was impossible, and gathering courage from its dictates, they still continued to descend, till they reached a wider opening, that terminated that flight; they looked round with horror on the gloomy caves, which oft, perhaps, had witnessed the despair of hopeless, endless misery. Again the same sound issued from below, and the heavy steps of a man were heard distinctly. Fear chilled their very souls, and hastily they re-ascended the broken stairs, and in doing so, observed, through an aperture which had before escaped their notice, that the guard house of the castle lay immediately below, and that the sounds which had so much alarmed them, were caused by the pikes of the military vassals, who, as they passed beneath a low brow arch that led to the castle struck on the stone, and echoed through the hollow caverns dug within



the rock ; for a moment they stood to observe the wondrous scene, and happily returning, found the door, which Mary, with a trembling hand, unbarred, and ventured, for the first time, on those precipices, which, oft times, she had shuddered to contemplate. The clock, beating the chimes, from the tower of the base court, informed them it was still too early to expect him, and yet did Mary frequently look for the approach of De Courcy ; just at the moment when her attentive ear thought she could trace, through the stillness of the night, the echo of his steps. The clock tolled twelve, distressful minute ; well did she know the Earl, but little used to wait, by that time would expect her ; to go, was misery : to stay, impossible. She gave the billet to the hand of the faithful Anna, with a strict charge, that she should there abide his coming, and retired, imprest with more than usual awe ; as alone she dared to

tread in darkness through the dreary cavern of the rock. Anna, who listened to her parting steps, and feared for nothing but her gentle mistress, heard, suddenly the voice of one in perils, trusting that Almerick might not reach the place before she should return; she followed her, and in that interval he gained the postern, and, too impatient from anxiety; was descending, frantic with alarms to search the beach, when, the maid returning, heard his departing steps, and, guided by their echoes followed him with rash adventurous daring. Just at the moment he accosted Ellen, she beheld him, and, had not his prepossession that she was the lady Mary, rendered him inattentive to her voice, a discovery must have been the consequence, and the high-raised expectations of the Count of Luxembourg been set in disappointment.

On entering the castle, Anna learned that the Earl and Lady Mary were

already gone ; but that the latter had desired she might follow in her letter, as herself accompanied the Earl on horseback for the greater expedition. The first enquiry on their meeting in the Lord Suffolk's absence was, for the fate that had befallen the billet : for Mary would have trembled at the idea of any other eyes than Almerick's beholding it ; and Anna rendered a sincere detail of every circumstance. It was then that jealousy, that bane of happiness, spread its destructive influence o'er a heart, where soft benevolence delighted to reside. " Thus then," said Mary, as she tore the billet, and scattered it to all the winds of heaven, " thus perish the witness of my credulity, and with it perish too, the remembrance of De Courcy. Anna, you may retire,—never again," she exclaimed, when left alone to her reflections, " never again shall I place faith in friendship ; yet Alme-

rick, thou, indeed, hast not done well,—thy offer to assist me was unsought, and often urged, before it was accepted, nor even then, but from necessity. Fear could not shake thy purpose; to thy soul it is a stranger; 'tis fickleness of temper; 'tis sickly love, extinguished by ambition, and yet, to one of thy unfettered spirit, nothing but this could have induced me to believe, even for a moment's space, that Suffolk's change of fortune, could have changed his daughter."

Lord Suffolk, amongst the numerous enemies, who rendered so chiefly his too high-aspiring ambition, found none so forward now, to effect his ruin, as he, who once had been his bosom friend, if that connection may be termed a friendship, which, must of course exist amongst those men, whose souls are subject to the same ambition, and who can smile in public upon all that

may promote the boundless views they aim at, though, in their hearts they hold them in abhorrence; such had been the connection that for many years subsisted between the Earl of Suffolk, and the Duke of Somerset, each well convinced that the other, if offended, might easily pull down the fabric he had laboured long to rear, unless he, by assisting his pursuits, could bind him to his interest, rather from fear than love.

When the great Regent of France, John Duke of Bedford, died, the regency had been solicited warmly for the Duke of York, who, being of too noble a disposition to condescend to flattery, although he asked it of the King, paid not that compliment to Margaret, a circumstance which my good Lord of Suffolk did not fail to mention with some asperity, and the more effectually as the Duke of

Somerset had lately, more than once opposed him, with somewhat more of success than met his pleasure ; had already obtained the choice of Margaret for that important post, and as Lord Suffolk wished for his removal, that was acceded to him as a favor, which, in reality, was much desired, and Richard of York retired in disgust to Ireland, where the fatal plans, that soon afterwards brought such lamentable ills on England, were first concerted.

Yet Margaret was far indeed from wishing, even in thought, to do the slightest thing, that could, by any means, terminate in misfortunes, to a nation, whose glory, certainly, she had ever at heart, nor, could her attachment to the interests of her Royal consort to be doubted, though she sometimes pursued measures that defeated, rather than promoted them. Born in the Court of her father, where



his will was fate, she early imbibed that uncontrouled spirit, which, afterwards sustained her under circumstances that would have utterly depressed the heart of any other woman ; wedded too, at a very early age, to the easy minded Henry, who almost idolized her ; her aspiring mind soon gained an absolute influence over his every action. She saw, or feigned that she saw him, every day, the dupe of interested men, who, while they boasted only of their wish to encrease his dignities, pursued, alone, their own aggrandizement, but her attempts to arouse him into action, and shake off their power, were, she found, ineffectual ; and it was therefore, she at first resolved to take that active part, which, in the end, produced such general misery. Henry was good ; his disposition was at once, gentle, religious, and forgiving ; he would not willingly have done an in-

jury, not even to his lowest subject. Margaret's heart was the reverse; her form and face were faultless, but her mind was haughty and vindictive: yet did she know, full well, in public, ever to suit her temper to her Lord's, which was, indeed, a task of little difficulty with him, who ever held her in the right.

## CHAPTER XII.

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THE chief causes alledged by those who joined the standards of the Yorkists, being the too great authority entrusted to the hands of Suffolk, and the Duke of Somerset, who, though in secret, fearing, and possessing the most inveterate hatred for each other, drew on the general detestation, and an impeachment was the expected consequence. But Somerset, who possessed almost a supernatural degree of penetration, doubted not, but that, by becoming foremost in the lists of Suffolk's enemies, he should gain the admiration of the crowd, and veil his own ill deeds,

a measure, which, not all the policy of Suffolk could have withstood, but for an event as truly unexpected, as it was fortunate to him.

The lovely Mary had not ever been the only child of the haughty De la Pole, for once, a son, whose merits promised to overbalance even his father's crimes, had blessed his hopes with long continuance of his house's rising honors.

John De la Pole possessed a person manly and engaging: his figure tall and elegant, received even yet an addition from an air of nobility, which, ever untinctured by the pride of birth, inspired at once esteem and high respect. It was at the period that he had attained his nineteenth year, that Somerset's fair, peerless daughter, the Lady Margaret, who boasted the same Royal lineage as her Sovereign, first appeared at Court; her beauty charmed the eyes of all beholders, while many a heart submitted to her sway, proud

to acknowledge their soft influence,  
and for her

“In tilts and tournaments the valiant strove  
By glorious deeds, to prove their boundless love.”

Amongst the number, the Lord John De la Pole beheld, and loved the maid, his Father, whose ambition knew no bounds, regarding the grand daughter of John o' Gaunt, as the person who, in failure of the race of Plantagenet, must stand most fair to wear the English crown, solicited the no less aspiring Somerset, to give his sanction to the alliance of their families, with the assurance, that should any future circumstances give opportunity for the exertion of her claims, he would, with all the utmost limits of his power support them. The Duke, who would most willingly have seen his daughter matched with a higher race, but little liked the measure, yet well convinced, should

Suffolk be in opposition to them, their future hopes were vain; yielded his consent, though somewhat coldly, for, in the person of the Lady Margaret were centered all his views of added greatness, and, for her aggrandisement was every faculty of his soul employed with unremitted ardour.

It was fortunate for the youthful Margaret, that, from the courtly train who woo'd her smiles, she had selected him, whom fate, and their ambitious sires had destined for her Lord; for whether their decrees were consonant to her wishes, appeared a point they did but slightly heed. The enraptured bosom of Lord John beat high with happiness, which soon he hoped the promised hand of Margaret would secure, beyond the power of fortune to disturb; nor, was it without the most unfeigned regret, that he, at that eventful period, heard the honor done him by the Queen, who, on an embassy of honor to the



Court of Raiguer, Duke of Anjou, her illustrious Sire, had named him her Ambassador, yet, to refuse it, was impossible and, with reluctance, the Lord John departed from the coast of England, which, nothing but the flattering prospect of a quick return could have rendered supportable; alas! far different was the stern decrees of unrelenting destiny. The boisterous winds arose: all hopes were vain, the vessel was split upon the rocks of Calais, and hundreds in the ocean found their graves. The heart of Margaret mourned the early fate of him she loved; Lord Suffolk loved him too, but in the bosom of the politic and wily statesman, the feelings of the Father glowed less ardently. It was on the following year that Mary, now the heiress of his honors, and who had never since the days of earliest infancy, beheld her brother, was sent for from the convent's sainted roof, to grace her Father's man-

sion, whither, 'tis probable, but for that event, she might for ever have remained an alien, unnoticed, and unremembered.

The Duke of Somerset, no longer bound by mutual interest, forsook Lord Suffolk, when the storms of danger hovered over him, and openly espoused the men who sought his ruin; men which, but for the unexpected, the un hoped for re-appearance of his son, Lord John must have fallen heavily on his devoted head.

Wrecked in that fatal night, when many a loved companion met his doom, he buffeted aside the foaming waves, that every moment threatened his destruction, till he was discovered and taken up by the compassion of some Moorish sailors, who willingly had favoured his escape; but for the avarice of the Commander of the Corsair, who conjecturing from his habit, that he was of rank, that could command a

ransom, carried him to Algiers, from whence he had not, till that happy hour, effected his return, and singular indeed, were the events which that one day produced; but, midst the many and eventful changes, the greatest cause of happiness to the Lord John De la Pole, was that no change had taken place in Margaret's sentiments. The Duke of Somerset, who thus beheld those reasons thus unexpectedly revived, that bound him to Lord Suffolk's interest, soon found pretences to return to the Lord Suffolk's party. The formidable party who opposed him, thus weakened by the decision of the Duke, regarded their most powerful efforts to displace him useless, and the attempt was dropped; a few short weeks united the Lord John, to the loved beauteous mistress of his soul; and Suffolk once more triumphed in security.

To one of Mary's noble disposition, the loss of fortune was no source of grief, in the Lord John, (who was, in-

deed most truly worthy her sincere affection) she saw and loved the only human being that could have saved her Father from destruction, yet were her feelings not totally unbiassed by self-interest, for she believed that now her once contested hand, would cease, most probably to be solicited, than when, as Suffolk's heiress, she was followed by many, whom that name alone attracted. Of Almerick De Courcy, too, of whom, since she left Stratford, she had heard no intelligence, she sometimes thought with anger, oftener with regret, and though appearances were strong against him, still would her rebel heart plead in his favour, while he, removed from her alone he sighed for, mourned at those marks of her scorn, which, told by the idle tongue of busy rumour, oppressed his heart with anguish.

That he had not beheld her, was the consequence of orders, that even for

her, he dared not disobey, when Henry honoured him at Stratford, with an audience, it was to command his services on an occasion of the highest import to his brave Father-in-law, Sir Owen Tudor, in which dispatch and secrecy were of the last importance, firm in his faith of Almerick's attachment, he held no youthful noble of his train more formed for such a service.

With a mind torn by various contentions, Almerick quitted Stratford, and vainly did the eyes of Mary solicit his well-known form amongst the youthful followers, who escorted the Royal pair to London; often had he written to explain the circumstances, which must, he feared, banish him inevitably from her regard, but the hand of the Earl had intercepted them, and not immediately being able to decide what answer best might suit his future interests, with cold deliberate cruelty

he returned them to Nevil, as to one that ever shared the secrets of his soul, De Courcy told his sorrows; who warmly urged him, ere he yielded to despair, to take his sentence from her tongue alone.

On his return from Wales, he heard that Mary was become the guest of the Lord John, her brother, and his blooming bride, at Kendal Castle; and thither, with the impatient step of love and of despair, he bent his way. Thus torn with doubts, without one friend to share or sooth his sorrows, he journeyed onwards, sometimes for whole days together, without beholding the face of a human being. The hints that Nevil dropped, touching the probable treachery of Lord Suffolk, occasionally lent a gleam of hope that Mary might be ignorant of the fate his letters had experienced, and still, perchance, be open to conviction; but it was a momentary ray that vanished, even as a



fleeting flattering dream, when he unwillingly reflected that Pembroke, the gay, the courtly fascinating Pembroke, the favorable chance his absence, and her just displeasure, gave him: the circumstances too of Ellen's probable situation, occasioned many a most distressful thought, which the impossibility of his quitting England to ascertain, rendered doubly painful.

Wearied one evening with excessive heat he rested from fatigue upon a moss grown hillock, unable further to pursue his journey; for, lost in thought, he had wandered widely from the path the goatherds on the mountain had directed him. No habitation was in sight, and the retiring sun, sinking to rest behind the aspiring heads of the stately forest, warned him either to arise, or be content to pass the coming night where he had chosen his seat: but, used to the hardships of a camp, and little, in his present frame of mind re-

garding ease, he determined on the latter. The soft notes of a flageolet came suddenly, wafted on the passing breezes: he listened with attention, and felt that society had still its charms. For to pass the hours till morning on the hillock, he was so late, so well content to make his couch of, would, he now thought, be more insupportable than, wearied as he was, to pursue his walk through the unknown paths of the almost impenetrable forest, now nearly enveloped by the descending night.

Uncertain which way to direct his steps he listened to the simple strain; and, guided by the sounds, struck through a little winding path that led to the eastward: at every step the notes grew more distinct. Charmed with the soothing strain he felt reanimated, and the bleating of a flock of sheep convinced him that he must be near the dwelling of some peasant. Of this he was not long in doubt: in a small open-

ing of the lofty firs, which reared their proud tops even to the passing clouds, and stretched their dusky branches wide around, and almost overshadowed it; there stood a little humble cottage, a mansion fit for innocence and love, and, on a rustic seat before its door, reposed its poor but happy master; whose melodious notes, though touched by an unskilful hand, had charmed De Courcy's ear: his wife was busily employed preparing supper, and her cousin, a beautiful young rustic, standing on the plank that crossed a little brook, whose silvery winding waves flowed before their cottage, employed in catching minnows, to divert her infant kinsmen that were sporting round.

Unused to see such men as Almerick she blushed, and hastily led the children in; while Barton, laying aside his flageolet, with kind unstudied hos-

pitality unclosed the wicket, and invited him to enter.

“ It were but folly to make use of ceremony, friend,” replied de Courcy, with the same air as if accosting one of old acquaintance. “ I am benighted, and the sound of your pipe has fortunately led me hither to entreat a lodging for the night; for, in these parts, I find I am but little skilled to make a farther progress.”

“ You are most truly welcome, Sir,” replied the peasant, “ yet I much fear my little cottage will afford you but an uncomfortable abode: however, what we have is at your service, and ourselves obliged, if you will use it freely. Perhaps, as you appear to have journeyed far, you will taste our homely fare. Elizabeth, here is a guest, give him the best we have.” I’ll fetch some fruits, and soon be here again.”

The honest Barton soon returned to them, with the best produce of his well

stored garden ; and the amiable Elizabeth sat down, though under some embarrassments, to dispense their humble supper to her husband and his accomplished guest.

“ But where is the young maid,” asked Almerick, looking around him, with the first gleam of discontent that had overshadowed his features since he entered ; “ where is your cousin, whom I saw at the wicket ? will she not sup with us ? ”

“ O ! do not heed,” said his host, “ Eglantine is very happy.”

“ But I am not so,” answered he, “ for I have put her from her place.”

“ I pray you eat, and think not of her,” replied his host, “ it is her own choice.”

“ I am sorry for it,” said De Courcy, and sighed ; but he sighed not that he was deprived of the presence of the beauteous Eglantine, but that the fatal consequences of visits such as his had

but too frequently given cause to the guileless host to repent his ill requited hospitality. "Bnt your children were with you," he cried, "and I déprive you of their company also; let me entreat they may at least return."

Barton hesitated and smiled, while Elizabeth looked as if she only stayed for his approbation. "Why to be sure," he said; "my dame and I are used to their little freakish ways; but they would trouble you . . . or else.."

"Indeed they would not, I assure you; do let them come," said De Courcy; "I cannot bear the idea of being the cause that they are banished from your board."

The smile that decked the open brow of Elizabeth, announced that her guest had found the surest method to obtain her favor, as she rose joyfully to call the little Allan; who needed not to hear his name repeated, but came running to her, leading his little sister in



his hand, who had been, like himself, in tears; but their griefs were forgotten when each was permitted to ascend the knee of De Courcy, and play with the rich baldrick that confined his vest; but they often cast a glance of fear at his courtle-axe, as it glittered on his thigh; but, when he arose and consigned it to the low bench below the lattice, their hearts were all his own."

And Almerick too was happy; for Eglantine, with neither guile or fear, followed the children to the table, and took her seat beside him, with the same modest freedom as she would have done if he had been her long esteemed kinsman: though now and then she stole an unobserved glance, and made, in secret, some comparisons between their graceful guest and the young villagers, whose hearts confest her power.

The scene was new to Almerick, and, for a transient space, his heart enjoyed the general happiness that

seemed to hold its reign beneath the roof of Barton; yet, most unaptly, arose the painful comparison between their situation and his own. He sighed, and thought of Mary De la Pole, till the tear dewed his manly cheek. Barton observed with regret the rising melancholy of his guest; and, taking up his flageolet, played a soft soothing air, to which fair Eglantine united her sweet, though untutored voice, while Elizabeth withdrew to prepare a bed (the best their dwelling boasted) for the welcome stranger.

Early as the morning's dawn they met to breakfast; and Almeriek, after having with much difficulty prevailed on Barton to suffer him to give some little tokens of esteem to his children, took his leave, with regret, of such a happy enviable family; which nothing but the hopes of beholding Mary could, in his present frame of mind, have made amends for.

Ere many days were past he did indeed behold her ; but, alas ! how widely different does events, to which we look forward with anxious expectation, too often prove to what our flattering fancy has foretold them. It was after emerging from an enchanting wood, that skirted the northern side of the Kendal hills, that he began to ascend them, with the steps of eager expectation ; and the lofty battlements of the Castle rose gradually upon the view with most majestic grandeur.

“ Is the Lord John De la Pole at the Castle ? ” asked De Courcy, of a man he met descending, and whom, by the badge he wore, he knew to be a vassal of his house. “ No, Sir, he left it yesterday,” he answered. “ And the Lady Margaret ! Is she too absent ? ”

“ She accompanied my Lord to Clonmell Castle ; but the Lady Mary is at

Kendall. Shall I conduct you to the gates, Sir."

" I thank . . . no. Is there, I pray you, any visitors here."

" None, Sir. The Lady Mary is alone."

Almerick was glad she was so, and pursued his way; and when within sight of the entrance, saw the gates opened, and Mary coming forth alone and unattended, he stopped to mark the way she took, intending to follow her; for, though near, he was divided from her by a length of wall, composed of ragged stones, dug from the mountains, that ran along the brow of the steep precipice, at whose base fell the foaming cataract, that, issuing from the rocks behind the Castle, dashed their white foaming waves down its chalky sides, and, in the bottom, joined the rapid stream, and rolled away for many a lengthened mile. Without observing him she crost the moat, and turn-

ing an angle of the Castle, bent her way towards the beach, where oft she loved to stray.

Almerick, while yet he stood indulging in the momentary pleasure of contemplating the loved form, sighed, yet feared to approach. Suddenly he observed her change her course, and bent it with a quicker step towards a youth, who seemed to approach and to salute her with unusual pleasure, and somewhat more of freedom than accorded with De Corcy's peace. He marked, with an indignant soul, the way they gaily trod; and, burning with resentment of her perfidy, pursued them. Winding along the brow of the precipice, from whence his tortured eye could still command a wide expanded prospect of the country below, he mist the way that led towards the beach, nor could he any more discover the objects of his anguish and revenge, though he continued to explore each

pass even at the imminent danger of his life.

Utterly unconscious of the way he took, he found he had nearly encompassed the Castle, and was near the borders of the wood from which he had before ascended, when his deluded heart beat with enraptured hopes, which now, alas! were banished from his soul.

Of a peasant that was leading his goats to water, he enquired, with a degree of eagerness that awakened the good man's wonder, if any one had lately gone that way; imagining that Mary and her companion had probably pursued that route.

"Aye, by the holy mass," replied the peasant, with a stare of amazement, "I think a pretty many past this way. As ye have eyes, one would think it must go hard but ye shoud hae seen 'em; for, in good truth, they did make



a murroi rout on't; thof 'twas a gallant sight."

"What sight, friend; whom dost thou talk of," asked De Courcy, who had but little heeded the good rustics discourse; who, in his turn, seemed to contemplate him as one beside himself.

"Why, in good faith," said he, "I mean the gentry; but yet there was one, as came last of all, that they do say be brother to our good King: Gad's blessing on him, that was worth 'em all; and some says as he came last a cause he was the greatest; but some do say it was a cause . . . ." and he rubbed his hands together, and his sun-burned face assumed a broader smile, "a cause—"

"Because of what?" demanded De Courcy, with impatience.

"Why a cause he had no moind to leave the Lady there that be up at the Castle."

“What was his title,” exclaimed De Courcy, advancing. The peasant stared, but answered not.

“What was his title,” again he repeated.

“Anon!” replied the peasant.

“Vexation,” said Almerick, perplexed at their mutual stupidity; “what was his name?”

“Ho! aye, on that be all, whoy. I con tell ye, as the saying goes, as well as another, mayhap: whoy they called him Pembroke, a gallant gentleman; he that fights i’th’ wars.”

“Destruction!” cried his auditor. The peasant stared, and, on beholding him stamp upon the earth with jealousy and passion, huddled the goods away with speed, believing him to be safest who was at the greatest distance, and fully satisfied that he was out of his senses; and often as he went did he turn with curious, though half fearful gaze, as he led his little flock towards

the valley, and wondered in his mind at what, in all his simple story, could have caused such wrath.

Not much time was devoted by the half-distracted Almerick to deliberation. Had he not seen, had he not heard enough? and yet he felt too well that his devoted heart still owned her power.

To upbraid her was an action that his spirit scorned: but to revenge upon Lord Pembroke, he vowed to lose no opportunity, and, with the laudable pursuit, we will at present leave him.

Appearances were strong, unquestionably, in favor of his conjectures; too strong to be withstood by a jealous and unfortunate lover, yet were they false. The Earl of Pembroke had not been more happy than De Courcy, for he had not seen Lady Mary. Traveling by accident near the estates of the Lord John De la Pole, and hearing that his beauteous sister was his guest, the

Earl (though on a very urgent expedition) made a circuit of some forty or fifty miles out of his way, for the pleasure of paying his devotions to the fair idol who claimed his worship: but these were circumstances by no means singular to the gay Jasper of Pembroke. Unfortunately he had selected a season somewhat inimical to the good success of his wishes; for, in the absence of her brother and the Lady Margaret, Mary had made known her pleasure to receive no visitors; an order that was not reversed in favor of the Earl, though he had spared no means that might induce the obdurate dame to change her resolution.

Her brother, the Lord John, being that day engaged in the chase, followed the boar near to the confines of his own domains, and, giving his steed to an attendant, intended to enter the Castle and pay an unexpected visit to his lovely sister. She beheld him at that

moment, and ran forward to meet him, unconscious of the pangs she was inflicting on a heart she had been long, by more than half, disposed to receive again into her service, had but its master condescended to solicit it.

Gloomy and miserable, De Courcy retraced the ways he had travelled thither with added anguish; he then believed that nothing could surpass the pangs of uncertainty. Alas! he found, by sad experience, those hours, wretched as they were, were winged with happiness, compared to those which were rendered insupportable by the conviction of Mary's want of faith. In every part he heard of Pembroke, and ever heard his name accompanied by an enthusiastic admiration, that were as the barbed arrow to his soul. Arriving at the banks of the Tyne, and unable to procure further intelligence of the route he had pursued, he very fortunately

followed that opposite to what the Earl had taken, and, by that means, he happily was saved the misery of lifting, in the hour of madness, his angry arm against the friend he loved.

He no sooner arrived at Court than Henry, who placed in none but Margaret a greater confidence than in De Courcy, that totally prevented his design of following Pembroke, whom he had been there informed was gone upon a secret expedition into Scotland.

The situation of affairs appeared at this period to turn greatly in favor of Henry, who readily crediting the promises of allegiance made by Richard of York, no longer entertained an idea of danger: but Margaret was not to be thus easily deceived: full well she knew that the hopes of obtaining sovereign authority once entertained could not be lightly parted with, and knowing in her own heart how far she was from entertaining the most distant thought



of adhering to the agreements she had entered into, rather from policy than choice, it is no wonder if she imagined the intentions of the Duke were of a similar nature ; and, convinced at last of the good policy of gaining to her interests the wishes of her subjects (a circumstance she had formerly too lightly heeded), she determined on making a progress through divers of the principal counties of whose zeal she doubted.

The new formed league between Lord Suffolk and the Duke of Somerset, had drawn on both unlooked for inconveniencies. The nobles, who had before regarded them (even separately) as being possest of far too great a share of power, now beheld them, with alarm, pursuing schemes of encroachment and self interest, which threatened to bring heavy and most insupportable disasters on the land.

To procure, as he pretended (Hea-

ven knows how truly), a redress of this growing evil, the Duke of York, at the expiration of a very short period, and, in direct contradiction to his voluntary oath, again appeared at the head of a most formidable army, and boldly demanded the deaths, or, at least, the perpetual banishment of Somerset and Suffolk; both of whom he openly accused of harbouring designs to attain the Crown, in order to transplant to the brows of their united offsprings, and, confiding in the power of his numerous military vassals, dared to avow that the compliance with his demands should alone induce him to lay down his arms.

Imperious and disloyal as his proceedings were, there was no means to avoid complying with them. The armies of Henry had been (in consequence of a firm reliance on the good faith of the Duke) for the greater part disbanded; and many of the most

powerful nobles, who beheld their followers thinned by these continual contentions, had peaceably retired to their distant domains, and, though still willing, possessed of means by far more circumscribed than formerly, to raise a levy, on the sudden, adequate to the purpose of quelling such a formidable opposition.

The intentions of the Earl of Suffolk being to retire to his ancient seat at Sudbury, on the coast of Suffolk, dispatched a messenger to Kendal Castle, desiring Mary to repair thither immediately, deeming her security to be but doubtful beneath her brother's roof; who, utterly unacquainted with the intrigues of his father, and the no less aspiring Duke of Somerset, and conscious of his own untainted honor, positively refused to follow the example of the latter, who, on the first alarm, had fled for refuge into Scotland; but with a noble, though less prudent spirit, the

Lord John De la Pole determined to assemble his vassals, and hold himself prepared to stand a siege, rather than, by abandoning his native land, give a sanction to the accusations of the enemies of his house. With him too he was extremely anxious that Mary should remain, for he was too well aware of the difficulties she would have to encounter in so long a journey, and at a period so fraught with dangers. But the commands of the Earl, her father, were, on all subjects but one, a law to his gentle daughter; and, early on the day following that on which she became acquainted with his pleasure, she departed for Sudbury, with a heart filled with sad presaging fears, and not without shedding many a tear at parting with the Lady Margaret, who was no less endeared to her by the nearness of alliance, than by her many most inestimable qualities.

After a weary journey of eleven

days she entered, for the first time in her life, the gates of Sudbury Castle. The domestics received her with every token of affectionate respect; but yet it was not thus that her illustrious ancestors had used to be received. No friend was there; no family anxious for her presence, to watch with anxious love her entrance: no cheerful clarion from the lofty battlements bespoke the daughter of a race like hers: yet these to Mary were but momentary reflections, for one of greater import filled her heart. Her first enquiry, made with eagerness, was of the Earl, and she heard, with unfeigned regret, he had not yet availed himself of the safety those inaccessible walls would have insured him.

Unwilling to retreat while there was left a possibility to withstand his fate, he still delayed his coming, trusting that rumour had by far overrated the

power of the Duke of York, wherefore he sent her word he should at present continue at the Court, but wished her to remain at Sudbury.

“ Ah ! fatal effects of ambition,” exclaimed the maid, “ when will ye cease to lead my credulous father into ruin ! And why, oh ! why, just Heaven, is it denied me to warn him to seek betimes the shelter of these circling walls, nor tempt again the direful shafts of envy, leagued even against his very life. Yet wherefore wish him here ! Are these lone chambers, these forsaken towers, over whose massy battlements despair and melancholy spread the sable wings with most unhallowed influence, formed to divert the bosom of its sorrows ? Surely it is a dreadful presage of the ills to come that thus oppress my soul. Would I had never entered this dull pile, for happier had I been, sheltered by the protecting arms of my



loved brother, than thus alone to wander through this joyless dreary home."

The unrestrained tears rolled down her cheek as, leaning on her arm, she listened to the torrents of the beating rain, that, rushing heavily down the ponderous lattice, chilled her with dismay; till, startled by the blasts that loud and oft moaned through the long and dreary gallery, she raised her tear-fraught eyes, and shuddered at the vast extent of her forlorn apartment.

It was a large state chamber, in the gothic taste, and situated in the west wing of the Castle, which had been erected in the reign of the Conqueror, upon the Norman plan; having a keep and barbican before the base courts, and the walls strengthened from without by numerous buttresses, angles, and well built towers, from whose ivyed turrets the moping owl made the loan walls resound with many a dismal note and horrid yell: the top was capped

with battlements and horn works, and the Castle itself rendered the more secure by a deep fosse, into which the sea flowed, and entirely encompassed it: across it, on the north side of the Castle, was the chief entrance, by a ponderous drawbridge, before which was erected the gate-house, flanked at each corner with a tower, well kept and fortified.

The suit of apartments appropriated to the use of the Lady Mary, had, in the life time of its late possessor, her grandfather, been honored by the residence of Princess Catharine, when she first landed on the coast of England, and it still retained the costly furniture and decorations that had, on that occasion been made use of. The flooring of the chamber was of highly polished oak, most curiously inlaid with divers fanciful and emblematical devices in mother of pearl, and plates of brass wrought into figures; at the

upper end was the estrado\*, which was still covered with the crimson foot-cloth, as was the table she had made use of with tapestry of costly workmanship, and, on the estrado, stood the chair of state, above which was suspended a rich drapery of cloth of gold; three high arched casements, from whence the eye could trace the shores of France, entirely occupied one side of the apartment, whose deep recesses and stanchions were of grey marble, rudely executed, and formed a striking contrast to the escutcheons of the family, painted in various colours on the narrow panes of leaded glass; and also on the arras, which were of a rich murray velvet, was depicted many an ancient legendary story, in figures large as life.

\* The estrado was that part of a state apartment that was raised, like a kind of throne, above the level, and was where women of high rank sat to receive visits of ceremony.

The room adjoining was her bed-chamber; the furniture of which, though more decayed, bore evident marks of the great opulence of its Lord; a canopy of state was raised above the bed, of purple velvet, wrought with mossy silver, bordered with deep ermine trimming, and the depending drapery floated in rich luxuriance on the ground; yet, in the heart of Mary, it inspired no thoughts of sleep or rest, she shuddered at each blast that echoed round her, and seemed to augur ill from every sound, for the remembrance of her fearful dream was ever present, and much she dreaded that the fatal hour of its completion was approaching fast.

Eight days had passed, and yet they had heard no tidings from the Earl; upon the ninth a formidable troop of cavalry begirt the castle; the centinels who kept the watch upon the ramparts gave the alarm, and the massy draw-bridge was immediately drawn up,

while every preparation from within was made in order to resist them, should they attempt an attack, yet little could be hoped from the effort, for few were the number of military vassals that had been in latter years retained at Sudbury; and the force that was designed to secure the Earl, was not yet arrived there.

Mary, who on the first alarm being given, had heard the rattling of the bridge from her apartment, doubted not but it was occasioned by the arrival of the Earl of Suffolk, and in the emotion of her joy, descended into the hall, where she soon understood the cruel disappointment that awaited her, and as she stood upon the steps of the castle, which, from their elevation, commanded an extensive view of the country beyond its walls, she recognised the gay banners of the Earl of Devonshire, floating upon the winds, their silken folds on

which the golden-crested serpent wound its mazy folds.

Too well she knew the firm attachment that the young Lord bore to the House of York, to doubt, even for a moment's space, the purport of his coming, and she returned her heartfelt thoughts to heaven for the fortunate absence of her father, too certainly the object that had brought him hither.

During the whole of the day they continued to hover around the walls, nor was it till towards the evening that they departed, having, as it was conjectured, satisfied themselves from observation, that him they sought for, was not sheltered there; and from the high tops of the watch tower, Mary observed the progress of their route, as they slowly wound their way along the coast towards Nagland, nor did she mark their progress without thanks to heaven, that had inspired them to make choice of it, for she knew that the



road from Leicester, formerly mentioned by the Earl, her father, as the one he meant to take, lay in a direction perfectly the contrary.

Nothing was capable of affording amusement to a mind so ill at ease as Mary's, or if it could, for a moment, have forgotten its fears, Sudbury was, of all other places, least calculated to inspire it. Once it had been the favorite seat of her forefathers, but its present possessor had entirely forsaken it for the more animated scenes of Margaret's stately Court. From being by nature gloomy, it had now become absolutely melancholy. The Courts, through many of which (where once the numerous retainers met in active preparation,) no footstep ever passed, were half over grown with moss, and many a rankling weed of idle growth, and some of the posterns were, from long disuse, nearly choaked up with thorns and brambles; round whose wild

branches twined the deadly nightshade, nor was the inside better calculated to inspire pleasure.

One dreary day, while from the casements she contemplated the roughly rolling waters of the ocean, that lashed the terrace of the castle gardens, she espied the sails of a vessel that was labouring in a heavy sea, while the mariners strove to make the little bay of Elton, that lay to the left amongst the cliffs of Corven; as they continued to approach more near, she plainly saw a person on the deck, who waved his handkerchief repeatedly towards her, she returned the signal, and instantly dispatched the greater part of her attendants to wait his landing, whom she doubted not to be the Earl of Suffolk; but Heaven forbade the meeting,—the winds arose with fury, and blew directly from the coast of Suffolk: the ship, unable to make the wished-for port, was driven at the mercy of the ele-

ments, till nearly the close of evening, when, by the last faint beams of departing day, it was descried, through the gathering mists, making a rapid sail towards Harwich; still however, flattered with the hopes, that by some fortunate event the Earl might yet arrive, Mary thought not of retiring to repose, but with her women, past the weary night in expectation till day appeared, and again witnessed her anxiety. Her damsels strove with officious love to sooth the agitations of her mind. There was in the castle a minstrel, who had passed his youthful days in the service of the late Lord, his patron, and was grown grey beneath his roof, his kindness had decreed should be a shelter for his declining years. Arnulph, who was of the North Country,\* and once held in the highest esti-

\* A minstrel of the North Country was held in higher estimation than any other.---Vide, Beatie's poems.

mation for his surpassing skill in reciting the ancient provincial ditties of the times, was tuning his harp (the loved companion of his hours of ease,) in the great hall, and the tears of sensibility beamed in his eyes as he looked round, and recollected past times.

The soft reverberation of his notes reached Mary's chamber, and she sent to ask him to play to her some of the well known ditties that he loved, it was an honor that he dreamed not of, yet not less welcome, for many a year had rolled over his venerable head since he had been forgotten and neglected, and to be noticed by the grand child of his revered master, brought tears of honest pleasure in his eyes.

The evening had just closed on a bleak comfortless day, in the gloomy month of November, when the aged Arnulph entered, (led by a little boy, his grandchild, who helped to bear his harp,) the long deserted chambers,

where sat the lovely Mary De la Pole, the blooming image of the noble dame, in whom, in the good minstrel's partial eyes had centered all those unequalled charms that rendered her worthy to be the chosen partner of his loved Lord, upon whose portrait the reflection from the comfortable blaze on the wide hearth fell forcibly. He checked the rising emotions it inspired, and with a bow of mingled love and reverence to his youthful mistress, took his ancient station near the portal of the chamber. To the claims of modest merit, Mary's soul expanded with benevolence; a seat was ordered for Arnulph and his boy, beside the glowing hearth.

"Do you remember any song? Arnulph," she asked, "that related to the Countess, my mother."

"Ah Lady,—no," he answered with a sigh, for he, in common with the world, had heard and lamented her sad destiny, "we never saw her here, ere

she was wedded to your father : my good old Lord was numbered with the tenants of the narrow house, and Sudbury was too lonely to be made their home, they never entered it.

“ And did you never see her then ? ” said Mary.

“ Never, Lady,” he replied, “ I heard indeed, for fame spoke loudly of her virtues, that our young Lord was envied for his choice, but that was all. I amongst others of my ancient fellows, offered my services, but was too old to be of any use, since when, I have continued here in peace, I think some eighteen years.”

“ And here I hope you are not unhappy Arnulph,” said the maid, “ if you have any wish ungratified, name it without restraint, the Earl, I am well assured will grant it you.”

“ I doubt not of it, Lady, nor am I insensible of your great kindness to an old man like me ; but I have every



blessing, thanks be to my ancient master, who, may the Saints have ever in their keeping."

Mary smiled at the high regard in which he appeared to hold the favors of his patron, compared to those of the present race, and yet it caused an unwelcome reflection, for she knew full well her father had but very slender claims to the affection of his retainers, whose services he had but never been in the habit either of observing or rewarding; not that he lacked of generosity, but his ideas, wholly possessed with public affairs, seldom found leisure to attend to his domestic cares.

The Minstrel said, he well remembered an old ballad made on the birth of her father, and sung in the great hall of the castle before the Duchess of Lancaster, when she came to Sudbury, to stand in person at his christening. "Ah Lady! noble were the doings of that day," he cried, "no less than a

hundred and thirty guests of the fairest titles, danced in the hall till after midnight, and my Lord himself gave me this harp, it was then of the best fashion, though now, like me, grown old, and my Lady Maud De Spencer, his sister in law, whose picture hangs by the Black Prince, in the painted chamber, tied this silver chain to the wrest, with her own hands, and bade me wear it in remembrance of that happy event."

Mary requested he would recite it, and Arnulph, with unfeigned delight, prepared to obey, but scarcely had his well skilled hand swept the melodious strings, e'er they recoiled with horror and dismay ; no sound of harmony was heard to follow, but dismal and hollow groans, mournfully echoed thro' the spacious chamber ; once more he touched the strings,—again they uttered the same tremendous sounds ; each gazed with looks of terror on the other in silent and most fearful conster-

nation,—the hand of the aged Arnulph fell from the instrument, and Mary, overcome with speechless agony, sunk on the shoulders of the trembling Anna, almost deprived of life, at that awful moment, while universal silence reigned throughout the party, an old house dog, who had followed Arnulph, and lay extended on the hearth enjoying in quiet the luxury of the fire, suddenly started from his sleep, and fixing his angry eyes on one particular spot, growled in a low and hollow tone, while he continued without withdrawing them to advance in a crouching attitude to Mary's feet, where taking his station, he continued growling and alternately licking her hand as he sat erect before her, as if to guard her from the approach of one that came unwelcome, yet could their eyes discern no visible cause for his singular emotions.

“There is,” said Mary, as soon as she could find utterance for words, “some dreadful misery in these strange strong circumstances; the harp groaned at the name of my Father, O God! it was horrible.—Still does it vibrate on my tortured brain,—the dog too, his attitude, his seeming discontent, he must have seen some form invisible to our eyes; say, Arnulph, have you ever beheld him thus before? can you account for, if you can, in mercy ease me of my distressful fears?”

“I fear, my Lady, that I can,” replied the aged bard, who grieved for her afflictions, “but let it please you for the love of heaven, to ask no further.”

“I must—my soul is on the rack, and must be satisfied: what mean these warnings—what have I done—what am I yet to fear?”

“Gentle Lady,” he replied, “no deeds of yours provoke these mystic

warnings; but pardon me, perchance they are designed as preparations to you for some, at present, unforeseen mischance.

Mary, with eyes upraised to heaven, clasped her white hands in agony, the fatal, dreadful truth rushed on her soul, "Oh God, my Father!" she exclaimed, and fainted. Anna, and her attending maids, almost as much as their loved mistress,—the victims of despair, strove to recover her, alas, to what? but to a keener sense of misery, and Arnulph, from whose aged eyes, the tears of pity stole unconsciously, hastened, with all the speed his lengthened years permitted him, to seek the pious chaplain good St. Nicholas, whose prayers, he hoped, might haply sooth her bosom into peace.

## CHAPTER XIII.



THE following day brought with it the dreadful confirmation of her fears, and chilled her soul with woe. Lord Suffolk forced to fly the persecutions of his enemies, and finding it unsafe to venture taking the direct route to Sudbury, had, in disguise, effected his escape to Grantham, which was the most convenient part from whence he could proceed to take shipping. It was his intention to make no longer delay at the castle than while Lady Mary could embark, and steer with her directly for the coast of France, where in the territories of Reiguer, Duke of Anjou, he doubted not to find



a safe asylum, until the gale of persecution should subside. It was him, who waving his handkerchief towards the castle, had inspired Mary with the flattering hopes that he would soon be sheltered in its walls; the violence of the north winds forced the mariners to pass the bay of Elton, nor could they come to anchor nearer than on the coast of Dover; here the Lord Suffolk quitted the vessel, and intended to wait while a trusty messenger was dispatched to conduct the Lady Mary to him, for but too clearly did he now perceive that few court friendships last for fifteen winters, and felt, that the daughter he had so many years neglected, was the only one in whose affections he could hope to find relief from the calamities so heavy on his heart. Here, however, he soon discovered he could not rest in safety, the messenger he confided in, was faithless, who, quitting the road to Sudbury, turned his

steed to where a numerous party of the Yorkists lay concealed within an Abbey of Benedictine Monks, near Canterbury, to whom he revealed the place of his Lord's retirement. Anxious to render a service so important to the cause they supported, they immediately marched with a strong band, intending to surround the dwelling and secure his person, before any one could warn him to escape.

But one whose attachment to his master surmounted every temptation, informed him of the treachery ; no moment was to be lost ; his only refuge was in instant flight ; a vessel destined for the port of Calais was about to sail, and he agreed with the Commander to embark without delay, leaving his retinue to escort his daughter ; the very little hesitation that he started to every difficulty that presented itself, and the freedom with which he dispensed his money to encourage the mariners to

get clear of the coast of England first raised suspicions, for in his disguise his appearance bore but little correspondence to such evident affluence. Suspicion soon induced inquiry, and that inquiry an acknowledgment, from an unwearied follower, of his master's rank. The name no sooner had escaped his lips, than the destiny of his ill-fated Lord was fixed. Private resentment, (either for real or imaginary injuries, for the true cause was never really known) glowed in the bosom of the commander, and to that fatal sentiment the Earl of Suffolk owed a premature termination of his existence.

The dreadful tidings, with all their attendant circumstances, soon reached the castle of Sudbury,—to conceal his death from Mary was impossible, but of the manner, humanity induced her attendants to keep her a stranger. A raging fever was the consequence of the severe agitations she had of late

encountered ; she was conveyed to her couch in a state of utter insensibility, nor quitted it again for many a tedious day, during which period she was happily blessed with a total deprivation of reflection, for surely without error we may well call that a blessing which takes from the oppressed soul the power of retrospection.

Three weeks did not elapse before there arrived the most urgent entreaties from her Aunt, the Duchess of Norfolk, that Lady Mary would, without delay, repair to Framlingham, and at the same time sent an honourable escort to conduct her thither, for the Duchess was too well acquainted with the hatred borne to the Lord Suffolk, to imagine that any part of his possessions would escape devastation, and therefore held the castle of Sudbury to be but little calculated for the safe residence of his wretched daughter.

Mary, whose mind was overcome

by the late melancholy event, was sunk into a state of inactivity, possessed not resolution enough for the adoption of any means of safety, but a few hours rendered deliberation impossible: a band of fierce marauders, led by some desperate leaders, who, under sanction of following the banners of York, but in reality for the sake of plundering with the greater security, made an assault upon the castle; the greater part of the vassals had flown with fear upon the first intelligence of their Lord's being no more, and the few faithful attendants that remained, were either from age or infirmity incapable of resistance. From such a feeble train, although with joy they would have lost their lives to do her service, what hopes were there of safety? longer, at all events, than might secure the retreat of the inhabitants of the castle.

This was effected happily, and with expedition, by means of the subterraneous ways that led below the castle ditch, and had a communication with the neighbouring monastery of Saint Cuthbert. Mary, aroused by the visible consternation of her attendants, appeared for the first time interested in her future fate, but unable to take an active part, she yielded quietly to the entreaties of the ancient Chaplain, and bidding a last farewell to the mansion of her illustrious fathers, entered the passage with her little household, for there were none so destitute of attachment as to forsake her fortunes, and trust to the mercy of their enemies.

Scarce had they barred the massy door of their retreat, before they were convinced, from the sounds of riot in the castle, that the Marauders were in possession of it, a circumstance that added equally to their speed and cau-



tion, though of the latter there was little need, for scarcely was it possible that a discovery could be effected by those not well acquainted with the edifice.

The fugitives experienced from the good Father's of Saint Cuthbert's such kind and cordial welcome as become them to bestow, whose guileless lives, in every instance were suited to their vows. Mary, with a liberal hand, bestowed upon their holy house her gold and jewels, in order to secure a tranquil home for her lost Father's followers; and there, amongst others, who poured their daily orisons for her happiness, the venerable Arnulph ended the remnant of the days that heaven had allotted him. That night she passed beneath their peace fraught roof, and with the earliest beams of rising day, while yet the grey mists lingered upon the mountain's covering summit, she arose, in order to pursue

her way towards Framlingham, [and sighed, as mounting her palfry at the Abby gates, she cast a long and lingering look towards the towers of Sudbury, upon whose battlements the standards of the white rose were triumphant.

The progress of her journey was tedious and attended with many inconveniencies, arising chiefly from the danger attending on her appearing publicly, for such was the general aversion to the name of Suffolk, that even his unoffending daughter would not have been in safety if discovered; it was that reason which induced them to pass the days in some secure retirement, and only in the night pursue their way. Emerging, one evening, from the thick covert of an overbowering wood, “there,” exclaimed Isabel Peston, with undissembled joy painted upon each animated feature, “there rise the turrets of Caistor,—already do I discern my Father’s house,—how little do they

hope so soon to see their long, long absent Isabel."

"Are we then so near it?" asked Mary, of Master Godwin, the Duke's chief gentleman, who he had appointed to conduct his fair niece to his mansion.

"We are Madam," he answered, "something about half a mile distance."

"We are not then, I fancy, very far from my good Uncle of Norfolk?"

"Not far to the westward, Lady, of that ruined convent, stand the high towering walls of Framlingham."

"Thanks to Saint Mary," she replied, "I then shall soon again behold my gentle kinswoman. How long, I pray you, Master Godwin, do you think it will be ere we shall reach it?"

"But that, I fear me Lady, you are little able to endure the toil, or I should hope to night."

"Oh doubt not but I can support it well; the blessed reward will make

my way seem nothing,—come gentle friends, we must exert ourselves a little longer, our weary pilgrimage will end in peace at Framlingham;—but soft, look to the right Egbert, doest thou not mark the gleam of many spears down in the valley? we must retreat! oh wretched Mary, still art thou ever flattered with the happiest hopes, and ever destined to encounter the bitterest disappointment.”

“Fly Lady! fly on the instant,” cried Godwin, who had advanced to take a nearer view of those that had occasioned their alarm, “your fears are but too true: a numerous band who follow the gay banners of the Earl of Devonshire, are on their march, and this way bend their course.—Already do they wind the steep ascent: lose not an instant,—follow me, I beseech you—lose no time.”

“May heaven in its mercy be our guide,” replied the fearful maid, as

hardly able to retain her seat, she suffered her young footpage to conduct her palfry back through the almost trackless paths she had so lately quitted, now rendered still more wildly desolate by the deepening shade of night, then spread her sable mantle over the skies.

Mary took shelter with her female attendants in one of the most inaccessible recesses of the forest, from whence they could remark the progress of those they dreaded to be seen by, while the men posted themselves below the narrow entrance, in order, if necessary, to dispute the passage with their swords, and soon they saw the soldiers enter the forest, where, after a momentary pause as if to ascertain their situation, the main body struck into a contrary direction, yet some few straggling soldiers, who had loitered behind their fellows, passed near to their retreat, and loud and oft did Mary hear their lowless tongues pronounce her name, and speak

with regret upon the loss of booty they had sustained in being too late to seize : for, by some means, it seemed they had been informed that she had past the day there, which had caused their coming ; and deeply did they vow to be revenged on Suffolk's hated race, with many a dread and direful imprecation. At length they appeared to be about to follow their companions, when a contention rose that plunged the trembling fugitives in added terrors.

“ This wood winds too much to the right, Hugh,” exclaimed the voice of one of them, “ we must quit it, and strike to the other side of the stream.”

“ That leads but more to the centre of the wood, where we shall lose our way,” replied his comrade, “ I will keep to this.”

“ That is but little likely ; more than one have lately past here ; do you not observe the tracks of horses ? They are newly made too.”



“ So it should seem,” replied the other, joining him, and casting many an enquiring look around ; “ some cowards probably who have fled before us ; or, if they hover near, I would most willingly wish that we may find them.”

Without a farther search they turned to leave the spot ; and one, in wanton sport drew the tough bow, he carried on his shoulder, to the head, and backwards sent an arrow through the branches that, whizzing near, had almost pierced the heart of one of Mary’s followers, whose agitations for a moment prevented them from making their discourse, yet they were soon convinced they were not yet far distant.

“ I tell you, Oliver, you are to blame,” cried one of them, still loitering near, and calling to his fellows to return ; “ the Earl of Devonshire depends, you know, upon our joining

him without delay ; how know you but we may fall into an ambush."

His comrade muttered, in a sullen tone, something of cowards rarely being at a loss for excuses, and adhered to his resolution of crossing the forest, or, at least, exploring it as far as he should be guided by the tracks of the horses ; which terminated in the embowering retreat of Mary and her gentle damsels, who heard, with fear, each boastful threat he uttered. In this design it is probable he had persisted, had not the spirit stirring drum, loud echoing through the woods, and the repeated shouts of " Long live Henry Plantagenet," warned them to retreat. With rapid steps they overtook their comrades, who halted with impatience for their coming: for, as they could by no means ascertain the force of the adverse party, they deemed it most prudent to avoid an encounter. The sprightly notes of the enlivening flageo-

let no longer animated their weary march ; but, with cautious steps, they moved in silence through the path they had first struck into, and as the clanking of their heavy armour died away in distance, tranquillity returned to the perturbed soul of the gentle maid, against whose life and happiness their direful threats had been so sternly vowed.

Convinced that they were now safe from their fury, they once more ventured from their place of concealment. The night was dark and dreary ; nor did one ray of light illumine their way, save when sometimes the faint beams of a glimmering taper streamed from the narrow casement of a lowly cottage across the wide stretched moor, and was, to the woe worn travellers, as the welcome face of an unlooked for friend to the soul of him who, long deserted, deemed himself an outcast from the world.

Ascending in their route a rising ground, they distinguished, by the bright glowing blaze of torch light, that reflected on its walls, the stately domes of Framlingham.\* The sorrowing heart of Mary, bounded high with hope, depicted to herself the felicity she was about to experience in being once more received into the bosom of her family; for such to her was the Duke of Norfolk's: she listened in idea to the soft soothings of the gentle Duchess, and the accents of her loved Gertrude Mowbray, in whose society centred her every hope of future peace; to whose apartments, finding the Castle thronged with numerous guests, and little inclined to mingle with the gay and happy, she was, at her own particular desire, conducted privately; and, find-

\* Framlingham Castle was, in the fourteenth century (the period of these memoirs) the seat of the Norfolk family.

ing the Duchess and the Lady Gertrude were in the hall with their illustrious visitors, she signified it as her pleasure, that her arrival should not at present be announced to them.

“ I pray thee, Anna,” she exclaimed, as that young maid entered the chamber, with unusual satisfaction on her countenance, “ what fortunate event has spread those enviable looks of pleasure on your features?”

“ Dear Lady, an event that will, I hope, cause even you to smile.”

“ It must indeed be singularly good then: and what good tidings now, alas! can reach the ear of Mary De la Pole, that name and sorrow will not lightly part.”

“ Ha! do not be thus sad,” exclaimed the maid, “ full many a happy hour are yet, I trust, reserved for you.” The involuntary tear stole down the fair cheek of the faithful Anna, as she looked with a sigh upon the altered

form of her loved mistress, and Mary turned aside to conceal her own:—  
“ But yet,” she said, “ you tell me not your promised story, Anna.”

“ First, Lady, then, your noble uncle has not, as fame reported, joined the Yorkists; to whom, even at this hour, the princely Henry and his Queen are truly welcome guests.”

“ Thou dost indeed say true: thy news is truly welcome to my soul; though surely I have had but little reason to wish my most esteemed friends to be supporters of a cause in which my happiness has all been shipwrecked. Saw you the Royal Henry, Anna?”

“ Lady I did. The suite adjoining to this apartment terminates in a gallery that commands a prospect of the hall.”

“ Then you have doubtless seen around his throne some of our former friends.”

“ I noticed several, Madam.”



“Do you think I could go unobserved to the gallery: it would afford me much pleasure to behold our honored Sovereign.”

“Undoubtedly, Lady; but the Queen is not yet entered.”

“Go then and wait her entrance, and inform me when they are seated: I were loath to miss a sight so pleasing.”

Anna required no second bidding. To find her mistress take an interest in any thing, was to her so happy a prospect, who had through scenes of agonizing sorrow been her companion. It was not long ere she returned to conduct the Lady Mary to the spot from whence she might, unseen, behold the assembled guests of her illustrious kinsman. They passed together a long matted gallery, hung with arras; which, by a flight of marble steps, led to the corridor of that suite of apartments appropriated to the Royal pair. They

met with none to interrupt their progress, and, by a small arched portal, entered the circular gallery that surrounded the richly gilded dome of the banqueting hall. There, seated beneath the high raised canopy of state, sat the commanding form of the beautiful Margaret, arrayed in native dignity and splendor, suited to her royal race; and on her right hand was her gentle Lord, upon whose countenance beamed the united traces of benignity and peace, surrounded by a fair circle of the first nobility; but the enchanting smiles of apparent pleasure beamed on the polished brow of Margaret, came not from the heart: the remembrance of the regretted Suffolk was not absent; and often did her eyes unconsciously seek that part of the hall, where, amidst the portraits of the family, that of the Earl still kept the place assigned it when he became the

unamiable Lord of the fair ill-starred Mary Mowbray.

At a table, two steps below that of the royal visitors, presided the accomplished Duchess of Norfolk: her vest and petticoat were of cloth of silver, fastened upon the bosom by a rich baldrick of emeralds, and her mantle of crimson velvet, trimmed with ermine, on which she wore the chevron of her husband's arms: near to her graceful mother sat the peerless Gertrude; than whom, midst all the fair assembly, no fairer form was found: she was in earnest conversation with a youthful knight, within whose hand her's seemed to rest with unreserved cordiality; and whose soft attentive smile, as he leaned beside her, bespoke his soul to be entirely devoted to his lovely partner. On her the eyes of Mary rested with delight, till, in a fatal moment, her companion looked towards the gallery,

and, to her infinite astonishment and grief, she beheld the well known features of De Courcy.

That he should still be in the suite of a Sovereign, to whom he ever was ardently attached, was a circumstance undoubtedly to have been much expected, and such probably had Mary thought when she came to the gallery; but she had vowed to think no more of him, and, though she might in secret wish, she did not chuse to enquire if he was there. The afflictions in which she had been involved since the eventful night on which she quitted Stratford, had contributed, much more than resentment, to her adhering to her resolution of giving to oblivion every fond remembrance of De Courcy's love. When informed by Anna of Margaret's being at Framlingham, she felt but little pleasure from the circumstance; she had ever attended her, rather in compliance to her father's

will than her own choice, and was well aware that a persecution in favor of the Lord Pembroke's unwelcome suite, would be the certain consequence of again joining her train, and, for that reason, she resolved to avoid doing so. To Henry, as to the universal father of his people, she was attached with the most ardent enthusiasm; in beholding him she really felt the most unfeigned pleasure; but we are not certain that that pleasure might not be augmented by the remembrance that Almerick De Courcy was a strenuous Lancastrian, and would, in all probability, be near his throne. Gertrude, whose every look and action possessed the most fascinating grace, seemed to regard the preference that Almerick paid her charms with triumph; nor did she appear to pay the slightest heed to the unceasing assiduties of the accomplished Owen Tudor, who evidently

strove to obtain her smile. Mary turned to retire, yet still she lingered; she felt that she was wretched: yet, as if desirous of being still more sunk in misery, again she turned her tear-fraught eyes on Almerick, again she saw him, with a gentle smile, listening to the enchanting accents of her cousin, and her heart sunk with sorrow.

Retiring from the gallery imprest, beyond a doubt of his inconstancy, and accusing Gertrude with the heaviest breach of friendship, she met the young dame Eleanor, the attendant of her fair kinswoman. "Know you, Eleanor," she asked, with faltering accents, "that gentleman?" pointing to De Courcy. "Is he a frequent guest at Framlingham?"

"Mean you, Lady, him who is leaning on the arm of the Lady Gertrude's seat?" she answered.

"I do," said Mary.

"He has of late," replied Eleanor,



“ been frequently a visitor at the Castle; but, as I have heard some particular engagements on his side, place obstacles between him and the Lady Gertrude, which, if removed, he would, at least from the Duke, meet little opposition to his wishes.”

“ My cousin then refuses him?” asked Mary, earnestly.

“ I know not, Lady, that she has yet decided, nor am I certain he has avowed his sentiments, though they are surely evident: but, though the Lady Gertrude affects to listen to his praises with indifference, she often distinguishes him, by her preference, to many a courteous servant that surrounds her.”

Mary could ask no more. Well might she have exclaimed, “ Oh! I am sunk so deep in misery that comfort cannot reach me.” It was true she had already believed him forgetful of his vows; yet, spite of reason, she still fondly hoped

to find him guiltless: but that Gertrude was the object who had caused that infidelity, was doubly painful; for Gertrude was, of all the female world, the friend she loved the best, and most confided in.

Unconscious was the youthful Eleanor of the grief she had created; nor ever entertained an idea that she had given birth to sentiments, in the bosom of Mary, of the most agonising nature. The guests were rising from the festive board, when Mary sought the solitude of her chamber; but neither herself or Anna being well acquainted with the ways of the Castle, they found it impossible to effect their return, without encountering those who were soon after heard ascending the broad staircase from the hail; and Mary, who felt not her spirits in a situation for company, immediately retired behind a large folding screen, to avoid observation.

The guests were past, and she upon

the point of venturing forth, when, hearing again the near approach of footsteps, she remained concealed. The voices were familiar to her ear, and, as they past, she caught a glimpse of Gertrude's graceful form, leaning upon the arm of a young cavalier; of whom she had a too imperfect view to ascertain who he was. In that moment every sentiment of resentment was forgotten: the force of long and habitual love thrilled through her soul with extacy, and she was on the point of throwing herself into the arms of her fair cousin, when the known voice of Almerick, as he pronounced with energy, "Dear Gertrude, we may yet be happy," rivetted her to the spot immoveably. Gertrude's reply was lost to Mary's ear, as was her form, in a moment, to her eyes. Every faculty was absorbed in misery.

What plan she purposed to adopt was probably, in that hour, unknown

even to herself: but, be it as it might, she was resolved never to rest beneath the roofs of Framlingham, where every thing denoted that her presence must be unwished for. She wished to make an apology to the Duchess for her abrupt departure, but she possessed not the means: the staircase by which Gertrude and De Courcy had ascended lay before her; and, desirous of leaving the Castle immediately, she descended it. Anna presumed not to enquire her purpose; to follow the fortunes of her mistress was so habitual to her that, further than as their changes might create her inconvenience, they gave her no concern; and she instinctively followed her through a number of domestics, who, ignorant of her arrival, gazed on her with astonishment. The gates stood open, she past into the outer courts, and, heaving a sigh for those she left behind her, bade an adieu to Framlingham; where, but the night

before, she had beguiled her sorrows, in counting the happy hours that might yet await her in the beloved society of Gertrude Mowbray.

The night, like her own labouring breast, was wrapt in gloom ; no star beamed through the sable veil of Heaven to cheer her devious path : it was a circumstance that would, in happier hours, have created in her timid spirit most formidable alarm, but it was now her only source of comfort ; to that alone she could hope to be indebted for safety from the lawless plunderer, and the pursuit of her noble kinsman ; for well she knew, unless his sentiments had, like his daughter's, undergone a most incredible change, her absence would, to him at least, be the cause of much regret and strict enquiry.

The bright rays of the rising morning's sun beheld her still a wanderer, still unprotected ; her languid lifeless

steps and pallid cheeks too plainly told the tale of sorrow that sat heavy at her heart, yet did she not complain, but bore her lot with unrepining patience, “and let concealment, like a worm in the bud, prey on her damask cheek.”

For the first time she ever had presumed to dispute her pleasure, Anna, the faithful partaker of her fortunes, was about to propose to her to return to the Castle; but a moment's reflection reminded her of the impossibility: her own strength was exhausted, and, from the number of hours they had been walking since they quitted Framlingham, she imagined their distance from it must be very considerable. While her eyes vainly wandered around in search of some hospitable dwelling, where she might happily obtain refreshment for her gentle mistress, she discovered, on the skirts of the moor, a man on horseback, approaching slowly towards the spot where Mary rested,



on the dewy grass, her way-worn form, but little used to toil. His sober pace, and calm benevolent looks, inspired her with courage to solicit his assistance. Lost in contemplation, the old man observed not the fair youthful fugitives, till Anna's plaintive voice aroused him from his reverie.

“How came ye hither,” he exclaimed, “my daughters, so unattended? Are ye to learn that times like these afford but little safety to travellers such as you?”

“Alas! good father,” cried the gentle maid, “reprove not the afflicted; whose actions rose more from necessity than our inclination. It is that has driven from her native home yon gentle Lady, nor can her feeble steps support her further.”

He alighted from his horse, on which, with no small degree of trouble, he placed Mary, and then offered his arm to Anna; while, with the other, he

led his horse by the bridle across the moor. Their journey did not exceed more than the distance of half a mile ; where tapping at a little dwelling, whose hospitable door stood open, he bade his fair guests welcome.

His ancient dame, Dorothea, marvelled not at their entrance : they had a sufficient portion of this world's good to make them happy, and able to indulge their wishes ; one of which was not to thwart each other's inclinations. Here, however, they were so perfectly well agreed that every possibility of contention was done away, and Mary was, with the utmost kindness, requested to consider herself at home, as long as she should find it either convenient or agreeable. Her worthy hostess led her to the best chamber, which had not been occupied since the last time their daughter Agness came from the West ; and that, she said with a sigh, would be two years upon next

Thomas's eve. "But I ought not to repine," said Dorothea; "time rolls away, and she will be here again the sooner."

The peaceful serenity that reigned throughout the little household, joined to the fatigue she had sustained, kept Anna many an hour, beyond her usual time of rising, a prisoner in the arms of Morpheus. Her first thoughts were of Mary: she arose, and, fearful of disturbing her, entered the chamber with a cautious step. She found her waking; but a restless night seemed greatly to have added to her indisposition; she had every alarming symptom of a fever, and soon was in the most imminent danger; a state in which she languished many weeks; but the strength of youth overcame the attacks of misfortune and fatigue; for to that alone her illness was to be attributed. The knowledge of her name was, to the aged Dorothea, a most welcome discovery;

for, in her youth, she had been nurse to her beauteous mother ; of whom she loved to talk with fond enthusiasm, and rendered, with redoubled pleasure, to her child, those services she once had paid to her. It was a circumstance that much endeared her to Mary, who had probably remained long in the peaceful vale of Carthorn, if the enquiries daily made concerning her had not awakened her alarms, and warned her to remove. At present she had, however, no occasion to fear, for her good hosts, once made acquainted with her wish of being unknown, had scrupulously adhered to the desire.

Too well, indeed, had they adhered to it ; and happier far it would have proved for Mary had they obeyed her less rigidly ; for the enquiry was promoted by those she would not surely have avoided, had not jealousy, that bane of every blessing, blinded her clearer reason.

Ere her returning health promised to sustain the fatigue of a journey, she reluctantly bade adieu to the kind hosts ; who most unfeignedly regretted her departure, and fervently vowed, at each revolving evening, to drop an additional bead for her good fortune. Many were the tedious miles that lay between her and the place she had fixed on as the period of her pilgrimage ; for she proposed, on foot, to cross the country from Norfolk into Monmouth, and there fix her final abode, by assuming the veil in St. Mary's Priory. The idea had formerly given her pain when in her extreme youth ; and, during the life time of the Lord John, her brother, she had heard it intimated that such was the intention of the Earl of Suffolk. The supposed death of that brother had altered his determination, and, though Mary wept when she left it some few months afterwards, it was because she must part from the loved society of Ger-

trude Mowbray, and the engaging Ellen: yet, even for the pleasure of continuing with them, she entertained no thought of renouncing the gaieties and splendor of a Court, even though the pious Abbess failed not to point out that, to assume the veil within their walls, was the most certain means to assure herself of their society, and the favor of the saints. But Mary had now no longer an interest in the world: she had no longer kindred to protect her, or Almerick De Courcy to regret her decision. The Convent seemed pointed out by fate as her only refuge, and she doubted not of being joyfully received by those who had parted with her so reluctantly. She believed every one her friend who called themselves so, and she doubted not but the Abbess would be much rejoiced at her return to the Priory.



## CHAPTER XIV.



DURING her solitary and adventurous journey often did Mary retrace the melancholy events that had distinguished, with peculiar woe, the last six months of her life, nor was there in it a circumstance that more excited her amazement, than that Henry and his illustrious consort should be the guests of her uncle of Norfolk. It was true the Duke had never been in the professed favor of the Duke of York, but his being publicly the enemy of the Earl of Suffolk, and absenting himself and family from the Court, in consequence of disapprobation of his measures, had

ever been regarded (at least by Margaret) in the same point of view.

The Duke had, however, motives of attachment to the King, which, to a man of his unshaken principles, forbade his acting contrary to his interests. It is a circumstance well known that, during the reign of the unfortunate Richard the Second, the quarrel between Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and Henry, Earl of Hereford, had finally terminated in the banishment of the former, with the loss of his honors, and confiscation of his possessions.

The present Duke, the uncle of Mary De la Pole, was the only son of that ill-treated Nobleman; but, born in exile, he had but slender hopes of ever obtaining his inheritance. Upwards of nine years had elapsed since the decease of Henry the Fourth; and the Duke, his father, was, by the entreaties of his friends and kindred, prevailed upon to make his appearance in England, and,

at the feet of the throne, implore redress from his gallant son and successor, our fifth Henry, he complied with their wishes, and revisited his native land, on the eventful day that consigned that amiable monarch to the tomb of his brave ancestors, an event of general misfortune, but to none more truly so than to the Duke of Norfolk, who would have found in him a Sovereign anxious to repair so glaring an act of injustice, as that which, on account of his father, he had suffered, for he had already restored several of the nobility to their wrested honors, and gained the most perfect love and reverence of all his subjects.

Yet was not the noble minded Henry exempt from errors,—he was a soldier alike from the circumstances of the times, and his own inclination, which even his sports, while yet a child, evinced that love of glory, which contrary to expectations drawn from the

heedless sallies of his youth, has ranked his name foremost upon the list of England's Kings : war was his delight, and sometimes, in the ardent pursuit of honor, he was too apt to overlook the more domestic cares of both himself and subjects ; it was true there needed but to point out the injury to insure redress, but if it was not pointed out to him, it but too frequently escaped his observation. The Duke of Norfolk, he had, in common with all good men, often pitied and blushed in secret at the recollection of his Father's conduct, but the affairs of the state had devolved to him so much perplexed to permit his thoughts to dwell long upon private occurrences.

The minority of Henry the sixth, who succeeded to the throne of England at only nine months old, was necessarily a period of inactivity, except indeed, in France, where the sound policy and undaunted courage of the

Regent John, Duke of Bedford, his illustrious uncle, contributed, in the most eminent degree, [to maintain the possessions gained by the arm of his victorious Father. Possessions gained and preserved with toil and danger, and lost, alas! by treachery, and the intriguing policy of the Earl of Suffolk.

As it was the ardent desire of those who had the protection of the realm committed to their guardianship, to avoid all civil broils, so they wisely chose to pass unnoticed, over circumstances, that would otherwise have provoked the desertion of the nobility from the crown; amongst the number was the residence of Thomas of Norfolk, in England, where he had continued to reside with his son, ever since the death of Henry the fifth, but though he resided here with all the secrecy possible to be observed, it cannot be imagined it could be unknown that he did so.

The Lord William De Lacy, with whom the young Lord Thomas Mowbray, his son, had formed the strictest intimacy, introduced him to the King, then in his sixteenth year; the attachment he soon discovered for his friend, induced De Lacy to acknowledge who he was. The deeds of his grandfather, even at that early period of his age, excited his disapprobation and sincere regret, though they had placed a crown upon his brows; nor did the case of the gallant Mowbray fail to interest his feelings in the most lively degree. He lost not a moment to entreat the Lord Protector, his most worthy uncle to reinstate the House of Mowbray in their well-earned honors, and before the expiration of a month, the Duke again appeared at Court, with every dignity befitting his noble birth, but the period of adversity had wrought a most lamentable alteration upon a temper that was once without



a shade. The mild, the amiable manners of his youth, were flown, and in their stead an almost inflexible hauteur, bordering on pride, that scorned to be obliged, usurped their stations in his bosom, and while he somewhat coldly expressed his thanks to the youthful monarch, and the good Duke of Gloucester, for his restoration, it was but too evident that he regarded it but as his due, and thought no marks of favour from Henry could ever atone for the conduct of his father.

The sentiments, however, of his son, were widely different.—He justly considered that Henry was not obliged to repair the errors of his forefather's, and his heart glowed with the high enthusiastic gratitude, which such an action, so conferred, was calculated to inspire it with. Henry, from thenceforth continued ever to honor him with his most unreserved friendship, and his marriage with the ungentle Margaret

whose unbounded influence soon banished from his presence every one whose spirit would not stoop to aid her purposes.

The situation of the kingdom, she knew full well, required that he should, as much as possible, conciliate the nobles to the Lancastrian cause, and when, obliged to retire from Litchfield, at the time of the Earl of Suffolk's flight from thence, it was her intention to retreat towards the north, in order to be in readiness to join the Duke of Somerset, then at the head of a numerous and formidable army, coming from Scotland.

In her way she resolved to honor the castle of Framlingham with her presence, for there was a probability of recovering by so very distinguishing a compliment, the Duke of Norfolk, (whom she had found the means, to estrange from Henry) back to his cause, and was, at all events, from his

well-known honor, certain of encountering no personal inconvenience or danger. The event, in some measure, justified her expectations, though it had threatened to disappoint one of her most favourite wishes, that of annihilating, if possible, every branch of the family of York, of which, it is for ever to be regretted, she yet succeeded but too well in accomplishing.

Henry and the Duke met, after an almost entire separation of several years, with mutual and undissembled satisfaction, for each rejoiced to behold again the companion of his youth, and it was owing entirely to his entreaties, that Henry was prevailed upon to hold a meeting at Framlingham, with Richard of York, and several of his principal adherents, who then lay encamped at Norwich, for the purpose of accommodating their differences. From this the natural hauteur of Margaret re-

volted ; to her, even the most distant idea of a negociation with those who had abandoned their allegiance, was most highly derogatory, and she had almost prevailed upon her easy Lord to forego his purpose. But Henry ever appeared as if born only for the most promotion of peace, and who felt the most ardent desire to behold it once more firmly established, made him, for once incline to believe Margaret might be (though her wishes to preserve his honor uninfringed) be mistaken in the methods she recommended for its preservation.

Henry being seated in regal state in the spacious halls of Framlingham, and being royally attended, received there the homage of the Duke of York, who coming into his presence bare headed, and divested of armour, swore his allegiance on the foot of his throne with a right reverend, though manly confidence, and much apparent in-

tegrity, and the more to make manifest his pacific intentions, he came to the castle almost entirely unattended, except by some few of the nobility, who favouring him, and fearing to rely too much upon the good faith of Margaret, had insisted on being present at the conference, which being concluded, and many very important points adjusted, to the mutual satisfaction of all but Margaret, who nevertheless, dissembling her displeasure, affected to appear content. The Duke of Norfolk rose, and solemnly swore upon his sword, in presence of the assembled chiefs, that, as by his interference, this arrangement had thus happily been brought to issue, so would he ever hold himself to be, by every sacred tie of faith or honor, bound to promote with all his power, its strict performance, and raise his

arm in opposition to the party, who should first attempt to break it.

A sumptuous banquet succeeded, where each, according to our country's custom, provoked his fellow with a friendly bowl, and blessed the Royal pair; there, while the festive goblet freely circled, the various adherents of the contending York's and Lancaster's, endeavoured to forget that they had separate interests; and joy and pleasure crowned the happy feast, and on that memorable night of commemoration of delusive friendship, did Mary De la Pole enter the wide unfolded gates of Framlingham.

Jealousy, it has often been asserted, is an unceasing torment to the sad victims of its direful influence, so did it prove most certainly to Mary De la Pole and Almerick De Courcy. Returning from his journey to Kendal Castle, his first object was to seek the Earl of Pembroke; fortunately, how-



ever, he did not meet him, and De Courcy heard, by accident, the disappointment he had, like himself, encountered in Cumberland, his own could not be greater, though one most truly, most inexpressibly welcome:—to find he had injured Mary, by his too hasty conclusions, and while he reprobated his folly, he determined never again to be the slave of jealousy; yet Almerick, like many other knights, ere long discovered that resolutions such as these, were not more exempt from change, than those on other subjects.

And this resolution was certainly one destined for a short duration, for no sooner did Lord Pembroke join his royal brother, than discontent began once more to take possession of De Courcy's soul; the Earl perceived and regretted it, for he knew no means to heal the daily wounds their friendship suffered. There was but little reason

to enquire the cause that rendered De Courcy a stranger: him, whom he had once delighted to distinguish as his friend: his love for Mary was like his own, though secret. Often had it been the occasion of keen contention. "My attachment," said the Earl, one day to Almerick, when they had somewhat warmly agitated the subject, "is firm and unalterable; your's, De Courcy, judging by the wondrous merits of its object, I regard the same; yet let not a breach take place in our friendship,—let each pursue his fortune, and yield to her decision alone, but not with enmity."

It was a proposal truly noble, from one who, like Lord Pembroke, possessed from partial fortune what with the generality of women would have possessed such wondrous power; but it was too great a risque to be hazarded by De Courcy without pain, that he must labour her displeasure

was most certain, nor was it less so that he possessed no means of regaining her good opinion, since he was utterly ignorant in what part of the kingdom she had found a home. A kind of doubtful confidence was re-established between Pembroke and De Courcy, but neither could be said to be contented. De Courcy, indeed, had every thing to fear; Pembroke was gay, was graceful, noble and accomplished, possessions in which, perhaps, the amiable Almerick did not fall short of him, a circumstance, which even his natural humility did not render him blind to; but alas! his rival possessed the favor, nay more, the warmest interest of the Queen. Mary, he knew, possessed not spirits to contend with one of her unyielding disposition, and might, in the present moment, displeased with himself, sinking beneath the weight of affliction, and wooed by the loved brother of her Sovereign,

yield her own wishes to the disposal of the imperious Margaret.

He was now too clearly convinced Mary was not as he flattered himself, safe in the protection of her noble brother, the Lord John De la Pole. An arrow from the well strung bow of Sir Allen Scroof, had stretched the youthful warrior breathless on the ensanguined plains of Kendal, and the castle no longer able to maintain the siege, after the loss of the gallant chief, had been yielded to his victorious arm. Thus early fell the brave, the amiable John De la Pole, and his fair widow, Margaret of Somerset had fled, it was reported, into France, to the mansion of her illustrious kinsman, the Count of Amiens. About this time the King and his fair consort were about to visit Framlingham, and De Courcy yielded to the delusive hope that he might there, once again behold Mary De la Pole, and a gleam

of happiness, which, faint as it was, induced him, with eagerness, to become one of their suite.

Of Mary was he talking, even at the moment that she beheld him in conversation with the Lady Gertrude, when she remarked them from the gallery. The penetration of Gertrude had developed the secret cause that marked his brow with sorrow, and reason had for once the power to conquer love. She no longer regarded Almerick with any other sentiments than those of the unlimited esteem his wonderful merits gained from all who knew him. Often did he pass whole days in discoursing with her upon the unhappy combination of events that separated him, as his presaging heart too frequently suggested, from the maid he loved. Of her expected coming was the time, that even, at that ill-starred moment, animated the al-

most expiring hopes of Almerick, and his lovely confidant, when fatally his words met Mary's ear, and caused a very different interpretation.

Nor was Mary's the only heart that was but ill at ease at Framlingham. That of the youthful Owen Tudor was also the seat of anxiety and love; it was at the marriage of the Lord John De la Pole, and Margaret of Somerset, that he had first beheld the fascinating charms of the beauteous Mowbray, and their impression, though it then sank deep within his soul, was augmented by every subsequent contemplation; but it was the luckless fortune of the accomplished Owen to sigh in secret, and in hopeless anguish educated, and even thus early entered into the holy service of the church. Its rigid dictates forbade the indulgence of his new-born love, but to obey those dictates Owen found impossible, yet he knew not himself the extent of his



attachment, while though compelled to silence, he still continued daily to behold the dangerous enemy of his repose, until Almerick De Courcy sought the mansion of his noble kinsman, and enjoyed, without reserve, those envied marks of Gertrude's favor, which were withheld from others; for he knew not that the youthful knight, whom she regarded as the destined Lord of a fair absent kinswoman, was as a brother to the heart of Gertrude, to that heart which would probably have shrunk at the most distant idea of being accused of coquetry; yet certainly, where Owen was concerned, it was not wholly free from meriting that accusation. She beheld, not without secret satisfaction, the contest that her eyes created in his soul, and they were sometimes turned on him with an expression of esteem, that reduced the resolves of reason into empty air. Nothing could give to the enchanted Owen

one half the joy, as even the most transient look of approbation from the eyes of Gertrude, yet, in proportion to the pleasure he thus experienced, so was his misery ; his despair when he remarked with anguish those fascinating smiles bestowed upon another, but most of all upon the envied Almerick, he was ignorant of his engagements, nor could he possibly seek to develop the wishes of his heart, which infallibly as he feared betraying the secrets which he would gladly have concealed, even from himself, but which he was too little practised in dissimulation to hide from others.

I know not whether it is an assertion that deserves belief, that women, it is said, discover very early the means of tormenting, but Gertrude had, at least, by some untoward circumstance or other, discovered that her young kinsman could create uneasiness in the heart of Owen Tudor, and there-

fore with De Courcy she laughed, she rode, she passed the hours of revelry and mirth, in tracing in her father's stately halls, the mazes of the dance, or when his skilful hand called forth the soft tones of his harmonious lute, her voice would add a softer melody to notes inspired by love, and he lamented the absence of his honoured mistress. In his society she was no more the stately daughter of Norfolk, whose frowns could keep the gaping world in awe, but the gay, fascinating, playful girl; and some, who marked the change, regarded it more as the effects of caprice than of love.

At the moment that Mary heard the voice of Almerick articulating sentiments that chilled her very soul, she suspected not that they alluded to herself any more than she could that the words of Eleanor alluded not to him but to Owen Tudor, who as he ever was, was then at Gertrude's side; but

Almerick was there, and Mary saw not, thought not of any other. Gertrude no sooner retired to her own apartments, than her woman acquainted her with the welcome tidings that Mary was arrived, instantly she flew to embrace her long-lost kinswoman, and in the way, met Almerick coming from the chamber of the King, gaily she passed her arm through his, and as she communicated the welcome tale, laughed at his fears of Mary's scorn, and insisted on his attending her to learn his destiny at the feet of his mistress.

That visit which would have restored joy and tranquillity to the happy circle, Mary, by her too hasty conclusions, prevented, and her departure created universal and sincere regret. The Duke, utterly at a loss to comprehend a mode of conduct to him so unaccountable, accused his fair niece of caprice and disrespect, and resolved

no further to concern himself in the fate of one who so apparently disregarded his care, yet soon his anger yielded to the mild arguments of his amiable Duchess, who prevailed on him to dispatch his followers in pursuit of her, into every part of the country. Gertrude who heard, from her young attendant, Eleanor, the conversation that had passed between her and the Lady Mary in the gallery, was no longer at a loss to account for her having fled the castle, much too did she condemn her own conduct, which she was painfully convinced had conspired to confirm the error into which she had been led by Eleanor, and many a pious resolution did she form against coquetry, in times to come ; these sentiments, however, she thought it quite as well to keep to herself, and how well she might have adhered to them, none can, at this period affirm, for unfortunately for such a trial, Owen

Tudor, who began to feel every day more and more that the empire of reason was too weak to resist the attacks of love, and Gertrude's charms. Left Framlingham in the course of a few days, in company with Henry and his suite, (though such had not certainly been always his intention) but he did not leave it without the consolation of knowing that Almerick De Courcy was not attached by other ties than those of kindred to the lovely enslaver of his heart, for the emotions of the youthful Knight, when he became acquainted with the disappointment of his hopes from Mary's flight, were too insupportable to be unobserved by any, much less by Owen, who was so deeply interested in the discovery.

Several days had he spent in traversing the adjacent country, nor was there a convent within many a weary mile that had not been visited by De



Courcy, though without success. Oft in the day of battle did he seek, in the paths of danger, the death he wished for. And when the last faint sounds of the inspiring clarion languished on the distant breeze, he would seek with sad and pensive steps his lonely tent, and pass the slowly waning night in prayers for the happiness of Mary De la Pole, while she, unconscious that she still possessed a place in his remembrance, wandered unknown, a pilgrim, through paths scarce marked by print of human footsteps; while her faithful Anna, with unremitting and unceasing care, endeavoured to lessen every inconveniency, and sooth her sorrows; the former was sometimes, though indeed but rarely in her power, but the latter knew not abatement. Once indeed her head had for a time admitted the blessed delusive hope that peace might once again be hers, but she owned, alas! with a

sigh the fallacy of the idea, since Almerick and Gertrude had forsaken her.

Stopping, upon the close of a sultry day, (it was eve of Saint Eugenius) at the wicket of Saint Elfrid's Abby, to solicit protection for the night, she heard by accident the name of Father Gregory, "does he reside then within your walls?" asked Mary, with eager emotion, of one who stood near her.

"He does not, maid," replied an austere nun, who seemed to consider the enquiry as an improper one, and determined to give her no further information. As hastily as decorum would permit her she retired to vespers, to which the bell then summoned the recluse inhabitants of the holy dwelling.

"But one less rigid, not less fair," who marked the anxiety of Mary's accents, and saw not things through so severe a medium, no sooner heard the last echo's of the sister Agne's steps, than turning to the youthful

wanderer, "you seem," she said, "stranger, to take a more than common interest in the fate of Father Gregory, mark then what I will tell you—" and she spoke with caution, as if fearful of being known to give such information, "within the Convent's walls that rise to the eastward of the forest, does Gregory reside, at least he did so yesterday, but be not too severely disappointed if you should find he is, ere you arrive there, no more an inhabitant of the earth."

Ah! am I then," said Mary, "so near the sacred shrine of our Lady, alas! I knew full well that Magneville, the sad, the unhappy - Magneville, sought the tomb of my sainted mother, and will, to heaven permit, this night shall encounter him with orisons."

"Nay, do not, gentle] stranger, till the dawn at least, attempt a further progress, such forms as thine were, trust me, never made to pass unnoticed.

To-morrow, I will myself be your companion to the gates of Walsingham ; none, not even the lawless robber, but still pays some reverence to our calling, (our Abbess will permit it too) but speak no more of the purpose of his pilgrimage, it may be you will do him much disservice."

Mary reluctantly acquiesced in staying in at St Elfrid's for the night, and with the first rays of the morning's long-wished for dawn, rose to pursue her way to Walsingham. She found the gentle Catharine ready to attend her. During their walk, which though the distance was but inconsiderable, occupied much time, owing to the intricacy of the forest, she informed her that Gregory had, since he had entered into the holy habit, experienced much, and severe persecution from some of its rigid adherents, on account of his attachment to the Countess of Suffolk, and should it be suspected that his

pilgrimage to Walsingham was but to visit her shrine, he would too probably again become the unfortunate object of their pious resentment, although fast verging to the grave, that bed where the weary rest."

It was towards noon that they descended the luxuriant side of a stupendous hill: they saw the gothic spires of Walsingham, rising in awful unadorned simplicity, in the fertile vale below them: and here Mary found she owed a double obligation to the good sister Catharine; for, though none were refused admittance who came to offer up their pure devotions at our Lady's shrine, she would have much difficulty to have gained admission to the lowly cell of the meek, pious, suffering Father Gregory, if alone; but, thus accompanied, it was imagined she came commissioned from the Lady Abbess of Saint Elfrid's, and found, in conse-

quence of that idea, but little opposition.

She had been, it is true, prepared by Catharine to behold him in an advanced state of decline ; but he was even evidently worse than she had imagined. He was extended on his couch, pale, wan, and greatly altered since she beheld him last depart from Stratford : for the fatigues of travelling, and the persecutions of the Monks, had worn him much : he bore his illness with the most patient unrepining resignation, and a kind of lethargic stupor seemed to hang upon his senses ; but yielded, at her approach, to a more evident joy than had for many a day adorned his brow : he strove to rise, but it was an exertion that exceeded his strength ; but, with the most expressive looks of esteem, he held forth his wan hand, which Mary grasped, with the most sincere affection, while the too visible decline of his health awakened senti-



ments which it required all her resolution to conceal.

He was it seemed a stranger to the death of Lord Suffolk, and listened to the recital of events that had so fatally affected the fortunes of the fair relater with most undissembled regret; nor was those singular circumstances, which appeared as if designed to warn her too ambitious father of his approaching destiny, absent at that moment from the remembrance of either.

Gregory had intended to return from Walsingham, but fate forbade it; he was seized with an indisposition, the consequence of secret sorrows and his too strict adherence to the rigid rules of his order, that rendered him incapable of leaving the Convent of our Lady; nor did he wish to do so. He had no motives to endear him to the world; he lived alike forgetting and forgot, and patiently awaited for that awful hour, when, in the narrow tomb,

his wearied form should rest in humble hope before the shrine of the ill-fated Lady Suffolk; for which he had that morning made most earnest prayer, and received the solemn promise of the worthy Abbot.

All he was now possessed of (for his fortune, for which he had no longer a use, had been bestowed upon the Church), he gave to Mary; who lightly heeded the rich jewels, when compared to the heartfelt pleasure of experiencing so great an interest in a heart so truly amiable, so fraught with universal benevolence, as that of the gentle Magneville's. At the same time too he earnestly besought her to lay aside all thoughts of assuming the veil, till she was more perfectly convinced there was no probability that time might, by changing of her prospects, also change her wishes: for he had himself, alas! found but too little consolation in the

monastic life to counsel any one to enter it without deliberate reflection.

Exhausted with the exertion of talking, and the too ardent interest he took in all that related to his friends, his attendants advised Mary to retire: but, ere she left him, he promised to admit her again when he awoke. Quitting his chamber with reluctance, she retired to the chapel of the Convent, and past the hours in prayers for the eternal happiness of her departed and departing friends; and, returning with Catharine to his couch, she found his spirit had already flown, and left her to lament the loss of one for whom she had ever entertained the most sincere esteem.

A fortnight she past within the walls of St. Elfrid's; whither she was conducted back by the gentle Catharine. At the expiration of that period she beheld his loved remains deposited in

their last sacred home, in the same spot he had in life made choice of, and near as possible to her, whose remembrance, even in death, was dear. Half of the little wealth he had bestowed on her she gave for continual masses, to be chaunted by three brothers of the Convent, for his soul's repose; and, finding herself unable to remain in a place that continually reminded her of an event so much regretted, she bade a grateful adieu to Catharine, and pursued, with Anna, her weary pilgrimage to Monmouth. For, though in compliance with the request of Gregory she had promised not to assume the veil at least before the expiration of three years, there did not appear to her a place where she could, with so much propriety, pass that space of time as in the Convent of St. Mary's. Journeying one morning on the borders of Herefordshire, she beheld, at the distance of not more

than a quarter of a mile, a number of armed combattants, engaged in the strife of war. Gladly would she have retreated from a scene from which she shrunk apalled, but another band of warriors, suddenly issuing from the gates of Dunraven Castle, rendered it as impossible to return as to proceed. Compelled against her will to become a spectator of the engagement, she strove, but strove in vain, to keep her eyes from witnessing a scene so fraught with horror; yet did each shout of victory, echoed alternately from either host, again involuntarily attract them to the wide field of havock; while her prayers and wishes alternately took part with either party, as fortune appeared favorable to the adverse band.

High floating on the bosom of the winds her eye observed the proudly waving banners of the House of Norfolk, which she marked as it moved

along the ranks, and, forgetful of her injuries, felt, with all its force, that native interest which the bosom beats with for the loved honor of a valued kinsman.

Suddenly a loud cry of victory rent the echoing air; the colours of the Duke, her uncle, were torn from the standard bearer (who yielded them only with his life), and rested in the possession of the adverse party. The contest ceased, and the victors and the vanquished moved at length towards the spot from whence, unwillingly, her eye had marked the progress of the fight: but what were her sensations, what her emotions, when a prisoner among the latter, she beheld, with astonishment, the noble, the still commanding form of Gertrude Mowbray; who boasted "a spirit not to be subdued, though conquered." An air of haughty majesty sat on her lofty brow, and she seemed rather to command than to



obey her conquerors: the leader of whom, Raimond, the Lord of Falconbridge, met, from her disdainful eye, looks of contempt, alike for his power and his attentions; while Owen Tudor, slowly pacing by her side, appeared alone to engross her favor or her thoughts. Turning by accident her eyes on Mary, she hastily descended from her palfry, and flew to clasp her to her bosom, while her guards respectfully retired on either side, and, far from opposing, readily made way to let her pass at pleasure.

The Lord of Falconbridge was not so inattentive an observer as not soon to perceive the closeness of connection, between his beauteous captive and her new found friend, bespoke the taller to be of greater consequence than, from her unattended state and want of retinue, he had been otherwise inclined to imagine her. Of Owen, too, he was not heedless, nor did the menacing looks

that past between them, as each sat waiting on his stately steed the leisure of the Lady Gertrude to move onwards, however well they might become the former, well suit the wild forbearance of a Churchman.

I know not how long the courtesy of the Lord of Falconbridge might have induced him to attend his beauteous captive, had not the unexpected appearance of a numerous band of archers, emerging from behind the hills, compelled him to request she would postpone her conference; but, with a gallantry peculiar to himself, he assured her that she should not be deprived of the society of her fair friend. Gertrude believed she understood the true design of his offered kindness, and, as she remounted her palfrey, cast on him, in silence, a look of the most ineffable scorn; for she deemed it alike useless and derogatory to employ intercessions with her conqueror; but Mary, though

she could not avoid regarding herself as a prisoner, felt for herself far less than for her noble minded kinswoman. The sprightly fife encouraged the wearied steps of the steel-clad warriors, and half an hour's march brought them to the lofty gates of Dunraven Castle. High on its proud aspiring battlements was displayed the silver eagle of the House of Falconbridge: beneath which the soldier eagerly ascended, by the watch towers, to place, with many a shout of barbarous exultation, the inverted banners of Mowbray, in token of their being vanquished by their Lord.

At the sound of the horn the massy gates had been thrown wide to admit the victor; and, as his train past in proud triumph over the rattling draw-bridge, while Mary, as she heard the chains drawn up behind them, shuddered with the presentiments of future ills, and an unconscious tear bedewed

her cheek, at the sad prospect of a perhaps long and severe captivity; but Gertrude's firmer soul sustained the scene unshrinking: she drew the hand of Mary through her arm, and, with a fearless yet modest step, followed her youthful conqueror.

Upon the steps of the Castle stood the noble Countess Alice, attended by a train of beauteous damsels, who, with herself, awaited the entrance of the young Earl, she had heard the well known sound of his horn shrill sounding below the ramparts, and was come forth to welcome him from the combat. Graceful and tall of stature was the dame, and, though the lapse of more than forty winters had somewhat paled the roses on her cheeks, she still was handsome: yet was there visible in her deportment an air of mingled hauteur and reserve, but little calculated to inspire esteem in the bosom of a stranger. Her reception of the Ladies was

marked with a courtesy, which, far from being suited to the state of a captive, seemed rather to express a hospitable welcome to friends she wished to attach to her by gratitude.

Scarce had the accustomed salutations past, before Lord Falconbridge, upon whose feature impatient discontent was evident, quitted the hall in haste, under pretence of giving to his train some necessary orders; nor did the cause transpire till, on retiring to the apartments allotted for their use, and which commanded a prospect over the chief gate-house of the Castle's spacious courts, Gertrude and Mary observed that the banners, taken during the contest from the Duke of Norfolk's standard bearer, were already removed from the humiliating station they had at first been placed in. A compliment so singular, and so delicately conferred, could not fail to inspire them with

somewhat more favorable sentiments of the Earl of Falconbridge. To Gertrude he was not entirely a stranger ; they had met before, though no acquaintance subsisted between their House. To Mary he was, till that hour, unknown, and, had her wishes met success, he had still continued so.

The circumstance by which the long divided kinswomen had met at length, was simply as follows: The Lady Gertrude, on her way to Gloucester, to join the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk, had been observed, by some of the followers of the Earl of Falconbridge, who was at that time hostile to the cause of Henry the Sixth : from the recent residence of whom, at the Castle of Framlingham, made it received as a general opinion that the Duke, her father, was of the royal interest, to which his House had ever been in opposition : he had attacked her escort, which, though honorably and well escorted to



her rank, by no means matched the number of his followers, and the event was that they were necessitated to yield; a circumstance that, in the field of battle, was never known to happen to a Mowbray. Three days previous to that of the engagement, that terminated in her captivity, the Lady Gertrude had been joined upon her journey by Owen Tudor, who, having heard that she was passing near, paid her the compliment of becoming her escort, a species of gallantry by no means unusual in those days, though certainly not strictly necessary from one of his profession, being much more frequently practised by the Cavaliers, whose devotion to the female world was unbounded: the consequence was, that Owen became the companion of her captivity: but that was not of the description of misfortunes that he found hard to bear, since it afforded him the

happy opportunity of almost daily beholding the idol of his soul.

Gertrude found it not a task of insurmountable difficulty to convince her gentle cousin of the error she had so long indulged concerning the want of fidelity in Almerick de Courcy. She acquainted her with every circumstance of the flight of Ellen from Stratford; and also that, notwithstanding innumerable endeavours to discover to what part of the world she had accompanied the Count of Luxembourg, it was hitherto unknown to her brother.—“Though Almerick,” continued Gertrude, “bears not this blemish to his House’s honor with pacific indurance, nor can the Count long hope to avoid his just revenge; for the House of De Courcy is not amongst the feeble in arms. Often has he solicited permission to visit the Courts of Germany, but still in vain; Margaret, as if determined to thwart his every purpose,

still denies his suit: and in this it is said she is influenced by her no less imperious aunt, the Duchess Jacqueline of Bedford: but the truth is, the royal dame is doubtful that, should he meet with my fair wandering cousin, the event might disappoint the flattered hopes of Jasper of Pembroke, whose love, it seems, she is not less disposed to countenance than formerly, and bring it, if possible, to a happy issue."

"And does De Courcy," demanded her fair auditor, with assumed indifference, "readily submit to this prohibition?"

"Far from it, Mary. De Courcy, trust me, does not bear a mind that brookes indignity with patience; but there are powerful reasons, no less than to keep free, even from suspicion, his loyalty to Henry, that compel him to forego the wish, nor can he name it more. The last time he presumed to

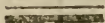
“speak of it, somewhat of sharp reproof (I know not what) escaped the Queen. It ill becomes, she said, a follower of her Lords to be so urgent in his request to join a friend of York’s—their deadly foe. Some might indeed be tempted to believe the specious tale that it was a sister’s cause that drew him thither; but there were others who, with better reason, would impute to the effects of disaffection.”

“How bore he this?” asked Mary, who knew full well that Almerick’s turn of mind was little framed to hear his honor questioned with impunity.

“Trust me,” replied the not le maid; “Not patiently forgetting, in the height of his emotions, that it was Margaret uttered it, he more than half un-sheathed his courtle-axe; then blushing at his folly, and the breach of reverence in the presence of his Sovereign, he dropped upon his knee before the King, and was hurried from the chamber by

the amiable Edward Nevil; who, with some difficulty, at length prevailed on the forgiving Henry again to reinstate him in his favor. A transgression against himself would never have awakened an idea of displeasure, but an offence committed against Margaret, who in his eyes could never err, was certain, as far as his mild nature could experience it, to awaken his resentment. Need I say then, Mary, that Almerick submits, with secret pain, to an evil that is now become absolutely insurmountable, for to renew his request again to leave the camp, would be to confirm, beyond a doubt, the well contrived insinuation."

## CHAPTER XV.



DAY after day rolled on their tedious round, and still beheld the fair maids prisoners in the embattled towers of Dunraven; nor was it without the most sincere regret that Mary discovered the conqueror of Gertrude was her slave. The words, the looks, the attentions of Lord Falconbridge, could be no longer mistaken; he had promised her, upon the honor of a soldier (an oath then held inviolable); to restore her to her father, and they were taught to believe he had, on the day following their arrival at his Castle, dispatched a messenger to acquaint the Duke of the



event that had placed his beautiful daughter in his power.

It was with the most severe and heartfelt anguish that Owen remarked this growing attachment; and well acquainted with the wishes of Gertrude and Mary to depart the Castle of Dunraven, and racked with many a jealous fear lest a continuance with the Earl should change those sentiments, he sought an opportunity to enquire of the Earl when it was probable the messenger might be expected to return; and, in the mean time, proposed to become himself answerable for their ransom upon any terms.

Perhaps the Earl of Falconbridge, whose fiery temper ill brooked opposition, discovered in this measure an insinuation of duplicity in his conduct; he hinted the idea to Owen, who, far from hesitating in his reply, frankly acknowledged he had divined his mean-

ing. High words ensued, and Owen once again regretted that his arm had not been trained for war. "For you, Sir," said the Earl of Falconbridge, with an insulting tone of irony, "you are at liberty to depart at pleasure; your peaceable profession does not subject you to the laws of the combat, therefore I bear with your insinuations, nor deem my forbearance an infringement on my honor. Let to-morrow's sun be witness of your departure from our walls: I can have nothing to fear from giving liberty to Owen Tudor, but, for the Ladies, you must pardon me, they are not lightly to be parted with." Thus saying he retired with much impatience, without awaiting a reply, and, in his hearing, commanding that a certain number of his vassals should be ready, with the morning's dawn, to attend Lord Owen from Dunraven Castle, whither his own good pleasure might direct him.

Various and opposite resolves by turns prevailed in the soul of the indignant youth. To leave the Lady Gertrude, of whose sentiments he was by no means certain, farther than that he possessed her esteem; and to leave her too beneath the roof of Lord Falconbridge, on whom, though he had hitherto treated her with the most marked respect, little reliance could be placed, was an idea from which his heart revolted: so did it to accept his liberty from him he hated; it was a species of humility from which his pride shrunk back with reluctance. But there Owen judged erroneously; for it was not intended as a favor, and therefore he could not possibly incur an obligation by availing himself of the offer. Of this, however, it became the joint employment of his beauteous friends to convince him that, circumstanced as they were, he could do nothing else to serve them, he yielded to their arguments, apparently; but his

mind had formed a vast, a generous design, which, as he doubted not, it would meet with potent opposition, he forbore to acquaint them with it. At the appointed hour he left the Castle; and a tear dropped from the eyes of Gertrude, and her gentle cousin, as, from their high lattice in the tower, they saw the massy gates close after him, and shut from their sight him, upon whom alone they could place reliance for protection there.

If Gertrude was detained from motives which rendered it extremely improbable the Earl would fulfil his oft repeated promise of restoring her to her afflicted friends, the situation of the Lady Mary was still by far more fraught with difficulty. For several days the Countess had desired to dispense with their company, and was become utterly inaccessible; and each, when last they met, had remarked, with many a vague conjecture, the cause that made.

that cloud of discontent to lour on her brow, which but too plainly foretold the storm that impended over them. An absolute denial given by the Lady Gertrude to the suite of the young Earl, had placed between them also a still greater degree of distance and dissatisfaction; for in that hour of rage and disappointed passion, he had vowed that she should never again repass the boundaries of Dunraven Castle. Gertrude, whose native dignity was her support, smiled at the empty boast; neither was Falconbridge inured to scorn, and he stamped with rising rage, as he exclaimed—"Nay, Lady, reserve that smile for Owen Tudor, perchance 'twould grieve him, should he chance to hear that Falconbridge enjoyed it."

She answered, it were well that your Lordship henceforth bear in memory the reverence due to us, nor interfere with what alone concerns our pleasure,

nor falls within the limits of that power, by which you here detain me, and my noble cousin, in contradiction to your oft repeated promise."

In spite of her disdain, the fiery Earl contemplated, with admiration, a spirit so congenial to his own, and his heart beat with the mingled emotions of love and anger, as he approached the haughty maid, and pleaded at her feet for pardon. "My temper, Lady," he exclaimed, while an ingenuous blush crimsoned his manly cheek, "has made me for a moment, somewhat, perhaps, too earnest, but 'tis a fault," and he struggled to suppress the rising pride that checked his speech, "it is a fault, that in your presence shall henceforth offend no more.—He that can cherish ought to your displeasure, must cease to feel the influence of your eyes; my heart, I feel, cannot attain such blessed indifference. Give me but to hope that time may change your



sentiments ;—by heaven my gates are open for your passage,—my guards shall wait you to your Father's Palace, myself too happy, if so far confided in, to be their leader, nay even this beautiful maid, (and his countenance assumed the darkening traits of awakened vengeance, as if the effects of some keen injury he strove to suppress) “ She too, and there are potent reasons that oppose it, shall be the partner of your liberty. Speak, Lady Gertrude, from those lips let Raymond hear his fate, speak and relieve the anguish of a heart would die to save you.”

“ Thus urged my Lord, I will, yet wherefore again repeat the honors you would share with me, oblige, but cannot influence me : as little, even as yourself am I accustomed to conceal the sentiments my heart avows, therefore, I pray you to excuse the freedom of my speech, should it offend you, that I became your prisoner was

the chance of warfare. I question not the justness of your cause, nor grieve for its effects,—I hate you not, but disapprove your conduct. If you are really anxious to promote my pleasure, adhere to the promise that you made unasked, and send me hence to Framlingham, then shall my tongue applaud your honor,—then acknowledge that Gertrude Mowbray has obligations to the Lord of Falconbridge, which she will not forget; but rest assured, neither the loss of liberty or friends, no, nor the approach of death, though in its most fearful form, shall ever tempt me to engage my hand to one whose mean endeavours to avail himself of my captivity, renders him unworthy to possess my approbation.”

“May endless curses,” cried the angry Earl, “light on my matchless folly, that thus could suffer love’s effeminate sway to warp the spirit of Raymond to a woman’s will. Lady,

I leave you ; yet, ere it be too late, reflect upon the rashness of your answer.—Still would I willingly be deemed your friend.”

With cold civility she bowed her distant thanks. “My Lord,” she answered, “I would no more detain you. As to the period of my stay at Dunraven Castle, I am but little certain, less concerned, so may not you, perchance, when the loud echoing shield of Thomas of Norfolk, shall, round your gates rally his numerous hosts ; till then, and but till then, the compass of your walls must be my boundaries. I would at present wish to be alone.”

“By Heaven, your courage” cried the Earl, “outsoars example,—but we may chance to put it to the trial. Gods! Gods! it must be more than man to bear this matchless scorn. Lady farewell, I go,” he exclaimed, as with a disordered step he left the chamber,

“ I go to learn, by your example, how to despise the power of my conqueror.”

“ May peace go with you, haughty Lord,” replied Gertrude, whose unchanging cheek betrayed no sign of fear, when she retired to Mary, who, overcome with the apprehensions of his resentment, wept at the dreadful consequences she foresaw, and much she doubted of fair Gertrude’s safety. Alas! she little knew, that even, at that very hour, the power of the so dreaded Earl of Falconbridge was the sole stay between herself and the dire workings of an unjust revenge. Often did she urge her fears to Gertrude, lest she should too far provoke his irritable temper, “ it may be so,” she answered, “ but be it as it may, I cannot teach my heart to pay the homage that I feel not for him; had the Lord Falconbridge solicited my hand, when independent of his power, I was, indeed, the daughter of Norfolk, even then,

perhaps, I had rejected him, yet I allow him to be noble, graceful of speech and person, nor unskilled in the soft flattering that wins most women's hearts, but he has passions that outstrip the winds, and root out every virtue, and render him almost, even to me, an object rather of terror than of love. But bating of this, how has he wooed me, even by my truth, on the engaging system of compulsion. He thinks me too attached to Owen Tudor, and has dared to avow his thoughts, still let him think so, yet never will the fear of bands I hold in scorn, induce me to become the wife of an ungenerous conqueror. No, Mary, banish your alarms, fear not for me, to the Lord of Falconbridge I never can dissemble the sentiments, such conduct must ensure him, nor will I try to do so."

Three days elapsed, and still the Earl obeyed her, in forbearing to in-

trude upon her leisure, though frequently his footsteps hovered near her portals, as if irresolute, whether or not to hazard the renewal of her displeasure.

Gertrude almost began to wish he would be less observant of her request, from the threats he had once dared to utter; she turned in contempt from one who held her in confinement, contrary to his own unsolicited engagements. She had but little to expect, yet was there in his character, a trait of native generosity, that led her to believe he would not suffer them to be treated either with oppression or indignity, and she had recently heard enough to make her apprehend that there were those within Dunraven Castle, though not at present openly avowed, from whom her gentle unsuspecting cousin, was threatened with severe and most unmerited injuries, and the recollection of a sentence of



the Earls in their last conference, induced her to believe they were not without foundation. She marked too, with the most unfeigned concern, the waining health of Mary, and feared that confinement preyed too heavily on her already melancholy mind.

Sitting one evening in her oriel, revolving many an ineffectual means for her release. A soft tap at the door of her anti-chamber called her attendants thither. Gertrude prepared herself again to encounter the importunities of the Earl, but to her astonishment, her ladies announced the name of the young Lord Walter.

This youth, the younger brother of Lord Falconbridge, Gertrude had frequently heard of, but had never seen, he had been for some time previous to her arrival at Dunraven, in the camp of Richard of York, for fame had already ranked him with the noble in arms, and in the wars of Flanders,

where he had gallantly served under the banners of the brave Manfred of Westphalia. He had received the honor of knighthood in the field of battle from the veteran's sword; he had recently returned to Dunraven Castle, and came commissioned from the Earl to plead his pardon for him, and though the cause he came in behalf of, did not meet success, his soft insinuating manners were not long in gaining Gertrude's confidence, nor did even Mary, though she shrunk from the idea of friendship with the impetuous Raimond, avoid the converse of his gentler brother; they parted mutually satisfied, and the following evening renewed his welcome visit to their apartments, now indeed become their prison.

Soon did Lord Falconbridge begin to regret the confidence he had placed in his too engaging brother, and he dreaded lest his prepossessing manners

should become at once the rival, both of himself and the absent Owen Tudor.

Yet Raimond was causelessly alarmed; not to the Lady Gertrude's charms was owing the frequently repeated visits of Sir Walter Falconbridge, but his heart was no longer proof against the too fascinating graces of Mary De la Pole, yet neither sought an eclaircissement, for Raimond acknowledged not his new-born jealousy, and Walter had many and most important reasons to conceal his love. "Do you, Sir Walter," asked the Lady Gertrude, as he was one day sitting in her apartments, "imagine that Lord Falconbridge would grant a favor to my solicitation?"

"Doubtless Lady, my brother could but ill deny the suite of such a fair petitioner."

"Your Lordship," she replied, "I find has studied more sciences than war; the accents of flattery fall fami-

liar from your tongue, but in the absence of the Lady Mary, I wish to hold some serious conversation, which much concerns her happiness."

"I wish she was not absent," he replied, and sighed.

Gertrude was silent,—the sigh, and the manner in which he spoke, led her to suspect the secret, she had not till then discovered, and she foresaw obstacles likely to rise in opposition to her purpose of gaining his assistance in the liberation of Mary. Walter recovering from the momentary confusion into which he had thus unwarily betrayed himself, entreated her to honor him with her confidence, and rest assured, if aught was in his power that might serve her, she might command him.

She told him candidly the pain she suffered from the confinement of her kinswoman, and that, on her account, and of the desire she had to

entreat the Earl to grant her a safe convoy to Framlingham, even though herself should be destined to continue longer in Dunraven Castle. "Here," said she, "I can perceive, though she complains not, that she is unhappy. Well, too, I know the peerless merits of the noble gentleman she honors with her esteem, and feel for her regret, at knowing him to be subjected to such pangs as he must suffer till they meet again. I pray you tell me then, is there, do you think, a probability I should not be denied."

"Trust me, I fear," he answered with emotion, "that you would plead in vain, pardon the distress I shall occasion you, but there is a cause, that will, I greatly doubt, deny her the pleasure of again beholding the enviable being, whom you speak of, till many a tedious year is rolled away."

"You very much excite my won-

der, wherefore, I pray you, is it probable my cousin should be thus lawlessly detained?"

"Pardon me Lady, it is a subject, I, above all others, should be silent on."

"There is some mystery, my Lord, couched in your words I little understand, so is there in the whole tenor of our recent treatment. When first we came, the Countess, your noble mother, treated us as her much esteemed friends, and scarcely did we feel that we were captives: now do we seem as strangers in the castle, or if by any accident we meet, (which still she seems industriously to shun) contracted scorn and ill-dissembled hatred sit on her brow, and checks all intercourse,—tell me, for you, I see, are not unacquainted with the reason of these changes, to what must we impute it; if danger threatens Mary, assist me,



I conjure you to avert its influence, as you hope for happiness."

"For that, alas! I can no longer hope, Lady," replied the youthful Knight, "but trust me, any power I have within Dunraven Castle, shall be exerted to assist yourself, and your fair cousin. The motives that excite the Countess's displeasure, it ill becomes me, as her son, to question; I hold them not the less to be beneath the widow of my Father; another time I will explain the story, at present pardon me if I take my leave."

Walter retired to mourn in secret over the disappointment, which the hint dropped by Lady Gertrude, had given to his wishes, while she continued to ruminate on the various anxious thoughts he had created in her mind, by speaking of the dangers which she could now no longer doubt of threatening the Lady Mary. The following day she waited with impa-

tience for the hour at which he usually paid his almost daily visit, but though she had never before felt half so ardent a desire for his company, she was not that evening destined to behold him.

—Lord Falconbridge loved without bounds, and his jealousy, if possible, surpassing his love, made him suspect a rival in every one who spoke of Gertrude, though merely with the praise her perfections could not fail to inspire. Walter was not less personable than his brother, and of manners the most gentle and engaging, what wonder then that Walter should create some alarms in the bosom of the young Earl, that wrought upon his mind even to frenzy, for though the charms of Mary could not be but unacknowledged, even by the heart devoted to another; she did not, in the eyes of Falconbridge, possess sufficient beauty to attract his brother, to pay such frequent visits as he had done of late,

and he decided at once, that it could be only Gertrude that attracted him.

In the early part of the day this subject had been warmly canvassed by the brothers, when Walter, though he hesitated not to assure him he had no wish to supplant him in the heart of her he served, forbore by avowing his attachment for her kinswoman, to remove the doubts of Raimond ; had the conversation taken place the day before, he had perhaps, done so, but the knowledge he had acquired from Gertrude of Mary's heart being too far engaged already, to leave him room for hope, made him resolve never to make it known, yet it is probable for Raymond's peace of mind, he would so far have forgone his resolution, as to make him the confidant of his hopeless passion, but his mother, the Countess, was present, a circumstance that utterly precluded the possibility, nor did she hear even the Earl speak of his

attachment to the Lady Mowbray, without indignation, “scarcely my Lord,” said she, “could you have offended me, or disgraced yourself more, than by an attachment to the daughter of the hated Suffolk, than by cherishing an idea of making the Lady Gertrude Mowbray the partner of your honors,—she, like her kinswoman, is the descendant of a race I hate.”

The youthful lover surveyed her as she spoke with looks of hauteur and astonishment, never before had he heard the voice of contradiction from his mother, nor was there, perhaps, on earth, a being, except herself, from whom he would have borne it.

“In what madam,” he asked, when she ceased speaking, “can the Lady Gertrude Mowbray, a daughter of the House of Norfolk, a House ennobled even from the earliest period of our annals, be deemed inferior to that of

Falconbridge, or wherefore seek you to oppose my choice."

"Cease Raimond," exclaimed the impassioned Countess, stamping as she spoke with indignant pride, "cease to dispute her will, who while she recollects she was the wife of Falconbridge, your Father will never be controlled beneath the roofs of Dunraven.—Observe me well, and let me be obeyed, look that this dame, this boasted daughter of the Mowbray's quit our walls—let her depart, nor suffer me again to see my son, forgetful of his Mother's injuries; but even upon my blessing, I command you, let not the Lady Mary De la Pole depart the castle, she is a prize well worth the keeping, for it will rack the haughty, the aspiring soul of Margaret to know her minion Suffolk's offspring, bows to the power of Alice of Arminiac."

With an air of resolute dignity, that

would not brook controul, she left the hall, leaving the Earl lost in contemplation of her vindictive rage. "Heavens," he exclaimed, starting from his attitude, as she disappeared through the distant suite, "and am I then commanded, even here,—even in my very castle, Gods! Gods! accord me patience,—shall Raimond of Falconbridge resign the settled purpose of his soul, and for a woman's threats; great, it is true, were the indignities shewn to Alice of Arminiac, and greatly should they be atoned, but not by Gertrude Mowbray; let him who does the wrong atone the deed, and let innocence go free. She shall be mine, nor all her kindred combined shall force her from me. For you, Lord Walter, bear it in remembrance, that tis to my pleasure you henceforth forbear your visits to the Lady Gertrude,—or, mark me Sir, this arm shall teach the obedience you have forgotten."



“That, as it happens, Raimond; fare ye well.” replied the youthful Walter as he left him.”

“Damnation,” exclaimed the impatient Earl, “shall I be braved on all sides. What, ho! who waits there?—tell the Lady Gertrude that I would see her,—stay—return, say to her that I would entreat permission to attend her an hour hence, in her apartments—go.”

Not half that hour elapsed, ere the impatient Raimond was at the door of her apartments. He had designed to solicit, but had forgotten, and rather commanded to accept his hand, which resolutely she again refused. Provoked beyond the bounds of patience, which he had laboured to assume, he left her with redoubled rage, vowing no farther to oppose the pleasure of the Countess, but the dungeon of the castle should become the abode of her, and the gentle partner of her fortunes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“ ’Twas agreed, ’twas made the first condition of their friendship, and sworn with all the pomp of priests and altars, that beauteous Rodogane should be our Queen: when on the morn, the very morn that should have joined their hands, the King forbade the rites.”

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THE Countess of Falconbridge, in wreaking her revenge upon the gentle and unoffending Mary De la Pole, was not acting more in opposition to humanity than to reason; from the political intrigues of the Earl of Suffolk she had unquestionably experienced disappointments of a nature hard for an ambitious woman to endure, and harder to forgive. She was not inferior to Mar-

garet: she was the daughter of Phillip, the potent Duke of Arminiac, who, after the death of the Countess of Cominges, became competitor with Charles the Seventh, of France, for the inheritance of that Duchy. Phillip, her father, took possession on the pretence of being the nearest of kindred; but, as the same plea was advanced by Charles, who, from his own immense resources, had a much greater prospect of becoming the successful candidate, the Duke, in this position of affairs, dispatched ambassadors to the Court of England with a proposal of alliance between his eldest daughter and King Henry, on the condition only that he should assist him in the establishment of his claims. The fortune of the Lady was not inferior to her rank; and the Duke, the more readily to induce him to accept the alliance, by which he thought to attach the entire force of England to his cause, promised to de-

liver up the full possession of all such towns and castles as were, by him or his ancestors, retained in Aquitaine, and had, in former reigns, been conquered by the Kings of England.

Henry received his ambassadors with honor, and listened to them with pleasure; and, at the expiration of a few weeks, they returned, accompanied by Sir Edward Hall, Sir Robert Rosse, and many other gentlemen of note, to conclude the treaty, and the Lady Alice was shortly after solemnly affianced to Henry, by proxy. The politic Charles, who readily foresaw how inimical such an alliance might prove to his interest, determined to leave no measure unattempted that might prevent its completion; and, while the unfortunate Phillip was lulled in fatal security, he secretly dispatched an army, that surprised his Castle in the night: from which, though himself had the almost unhop'd for good fortune to

escape, his son, and both his daughters, fell into the power of the Dauphin, who was the leader of the expedition ; as did also the counties of Arminiac, Rovergne, Moulessenois, and Lovergne, with the well stored cities of Cadeach and Severac. The Duke himself was long compelled to owe his safety to concealment ; and thus the marriage was, as Charles had wished it, though on the eve of being concluded, unavoidably delayed.

Phillip, notwithstanding this sudden reverse of fortune, lost not that greatest of all consolation, hope. He doubted not but Henry, his future son-in-law, would not behold him driven from his possessions, without exerting every power in order to reinstate the father of his affianced bride : but in this idea the Duke soon found, to the cruel disappointment of all his future hopes, that Henry lacked that noble spirit which ought to have induced him to

exert himself, and all his power, in the quarrel of the Duke of Arminiac, yet there was one respect in which he did not disregard his honor; it was in what related to his promise; he was still as much as formerly disposed to receive the hand of the Lady Alice, and more than once sent his ambassadors to require of his uncle Charles, of France, to name her ransom, and suffer her to depart for England.

This proposal, though nothing more than was owing to his own honor, was not certainly without its merits; for few, perhaps, under such a change of circumstances, would have made it. The King of France did not, however, think proper to comply with it; and, though he did not openly refuse, still found, from time to time, some plausible pretence for further delay. The fact was, that he had formed a plan that required time and secrecy to carry it into effect: this was no other than a

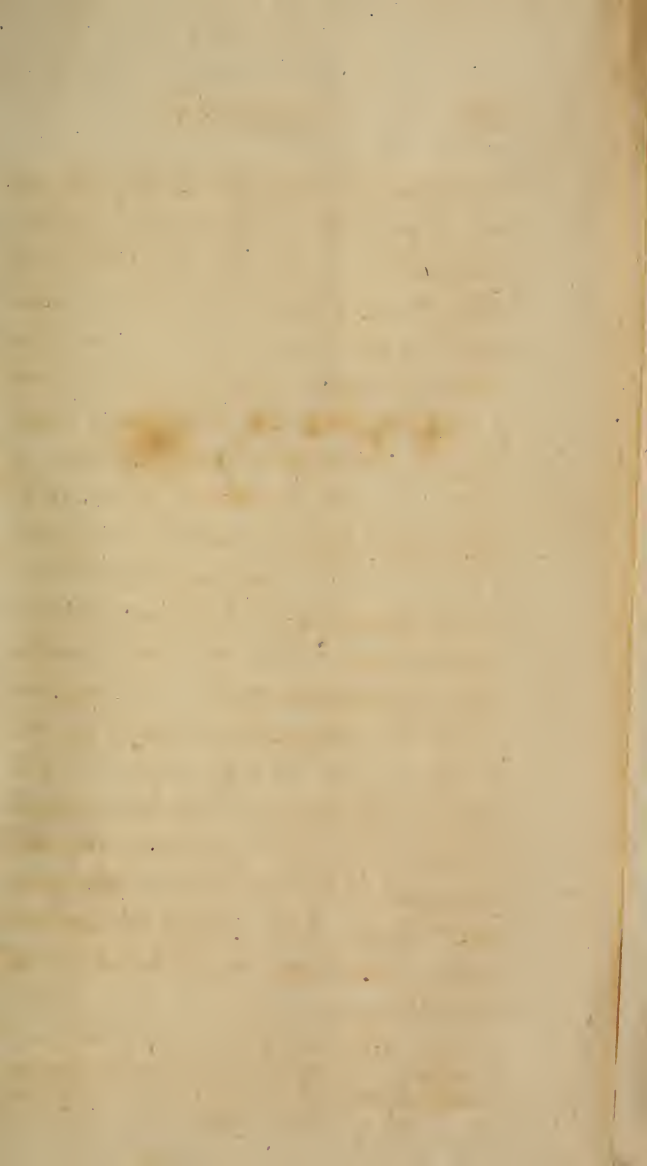


marriage between the niece of his Queen and Henry ; a marriage that would not only effectually detach him from the cause of Phillip of Arminiac, but secure his friendship to France. This measure, however, he made known to none, not even to the King: but, as a far more certain method of success, he sought to interest the Earl of Suffolk in an event that so essentially concerned his political interests.

From the Earl he encountered few impediments, nor had he indeed many to apprehend. The uncommon personal attractions of Margaret of Anjou, then in the Court of her uncle of France, had not escaped the notice of Lord Suffolk, who was at that time an ambassador to Charles from England ; nor had his heart, which should have been devoted to the unequalled merits of his amiable Countess, escaped her influence. If he had, previous to the period of his quitting England, began to regard the bonds of wedlock as an

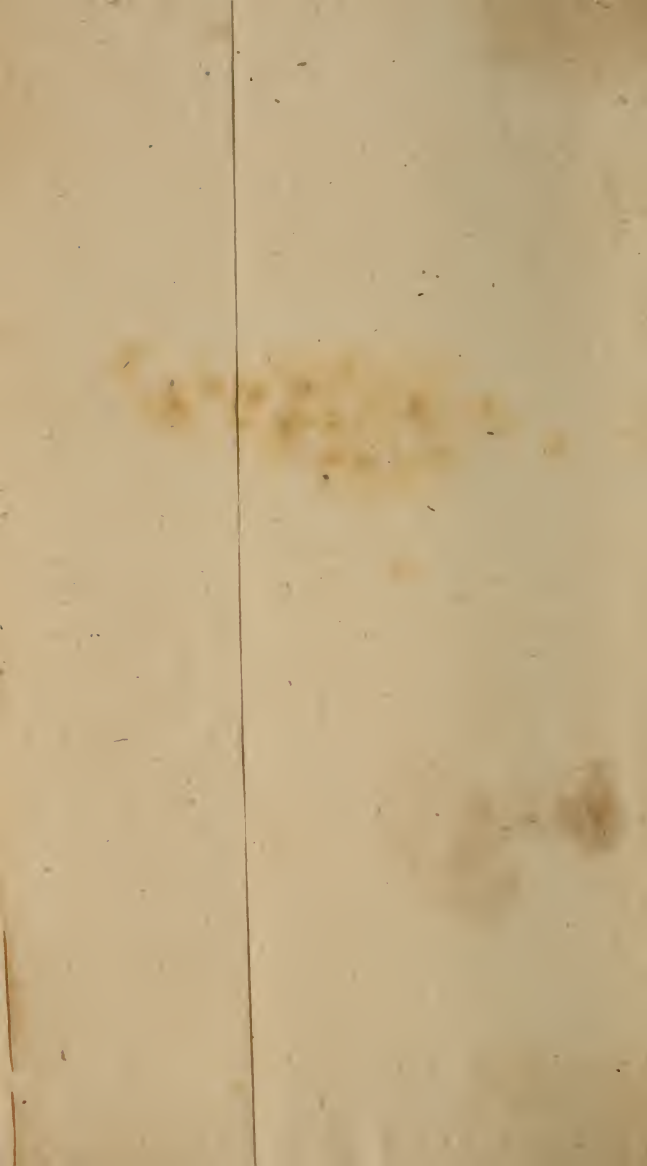
incumbrance, since he beheld her, he had found their bare remembrance insupportable. Next to making her his wife, which destiny had rendered impossible, he wished to behold her the wife of Henry, his Sovereign, and seated on the throne of England: and Henry, who was ever well disposed to adopt whatever it was the good pleasure of my Lord of Suffolk to suggest, read with avidity his well designed accounts of her extraordinary beauty and attractions; of the immense benefits that would be attached to his kingdom by her alliance, and the respect he was bound to pay to the counsel of the King of France, as being the beloved brother of his royal mother; nor did the wily Earl forbear to insinuate some circumstances most highly derogatory to the good fame of the fair Alice of Arminiac.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.













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